

with the Wonderful Mind

Chronicles Culture

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Books and the Youthful Mind



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COMMENT

Among the uncounted victims of the cultural purges of the 1960's were a pair of likable tots so familiar to most Americans that they seemed almost part of the family: Dick and Jane. For nearly four decades the principal characters in the popular grade-school readers published by Scott Foresman. Dick and Jane were hustled off to a literary re-education camp shortly after their last edition appeared in 1962. Their political crimes were legion. They were suburban. They were middle class. They were part of an intact family, with an upwardly mobile father and a loving, supportive, stay-at-home mother. They were unredeemably sexist, with Dick doing boy-things and Jane doing girl-things. They were fair-haired and rosy-cheeked. In a prepubescent way, they were highly moral. And they were happy.

The New Age "thought police" who uncovered this infamy inhabited America's great universities and the nation's centers of high liberal culture. Social psychologist Otto Klineberg issued the first statement of charges in a 1963 article for *Saturday Review*. Assessing fifteen American reading primers, including *Fun With Our Family* featuring Dick and Jane, he discovered that the books portrayed Americans as predominantly white and relatively well-to-do—"not exactly wealthy, perhaps, but certainly quite comfortable"—with good furniture, clean, attractive clothes, and "a pretty white house." Characters in these readers continually met friendly, smiling people, "including gentle and understanding parents, doting grandparents, generous and cooperative neighbors, even warmhearted strangers." Klineberg argued that a more balanced portrayal of American life—complete with crowded tenements, frustration, meanness and poverty—was necessary, and he advised a study of the readers used in France, the Soviet Union, Brazil and Sweden, to discover the levels of realism which small children could absorb.

As eyes opened to the deceptive prettiness and literary tyranny of the bourgeoisie, the confessions began in earnest. "My series suffers like the others in not having much appeal for the culturally disadvantaged," admitted the author of one primary reader in the mid-1960's. "It is middle class, white, and sometimes I am a little ashamed." In shabby self-defense, he went on to note that 60 percent of American children actually did live in suburban homes. But numbers or majorities or enduring values were meaningless before the demands of social justice. "White" and "middle class" rolled together off the tongue with such ease that the words seemed eternally tied in a racist linguistic knot. Even those moral attitudes found in children's readers which Klineberg had the temerity to bless—family solidarity, work, thrift, independence, courage—were quickly exposed as "white, middle class" in origin and therefore legitimate objects of scorn.

The machinery of revolutionary justice moved quickly. By the mid-1970's, such middle-class stereotypes had been eliminated from the new editions of primary readers, to be replaced by what one educational theorist called "ethnic and environmental pluralism." Banished at the same time was the one-family cast of characters inhabiting most readers, often superseded by anthropomorphic animals.

It should be acknowledged that the champions of the new order were correct in singling out winsome tykes like Dick and Jane as dangerous. These fictional moppets did represent more than one-dimensional characters inhabiting an unimportant set of children's storybooks. For just as primary readers reduced language and story line to their most rudimentary levels, so did they reveal their cultural content in equally basic manner.

Moreover, the authors of grade-school readers understood their roles as carriers of culture and shapers of the youthful mind. Unaware of the shifting cultural tides, one stated:

Our stories are frankly selected for their reflection of the American way of life. *It is an idealistic representation.* We know that children in deprived areas do not experience the same things, but why should they be surrounded by ugliness and ugly language? . . . Children's first impressions are strong . . . We want to relax children's fears and tensions and *create a desire for correct living* . . . Our readers are for all the children who live in the slums, too. If we don't show them something better, how will they learn about it? . . . The philosophy



we accept (a clean home, etc.) is an important one. *Children respect books in the first grade, and if you put it in the book, it gives it a stamp of approval* (Emphasis added).

With unsettling candor and self-confidence, this author reveals the simplistic psychological assumptions and sense of moral purpose which have motivated the modern bourgeoisie.

As ideologues have always known, children's books do transmit a society's commonly held values. Even in our own media-sorted decade, they help define for young minds the normal and the abnormal. And they give meaning to the phrase "social responsibility." In these respects, Dick and Jane served for forty years as puerile archetypes of middle-class America. They embodied for children a style of life which, by every statistical measure, a growing proportion of Americans from all ethnic origins was enjoying in the two decades following World War II.

Since the youthful pair's disappearance, children's books have remained objects of unrelenting combat. They are combed with ever-growing fervor to eliminate sexual and cultural stereotypes, or hints of what might constitute the proper way of living. Contemporary sex-education texts advise children to discover their own standards of moral behavior, and they assail any remaining restraints on children's sexuality. The scabrous, best-selling sex book targeted at first- and second-graders, *Show Me!*, combines kiddie porn, explicit photos of adult oral sex and prose that would give even Alfred Kinsey, God rest his tormented soul, a nervous chill. Another children's sex book, published in England, describes incest as "common" and "loving" and suggests the pending breakdown of that most universal of cultural taboos.

In this process, we have watched the ruling figures in education, the publishing houses and the media fail in their centuries-old duty of passing on to children a unique cultural heritage. In giving credence to the presumed intolerance of standards and norms and the supposed necessity of unfettered personal choice, they have also subverted whatever influence parents, local community or religion might have in guiding youth toward a responsible and enriching way of life.

The consequences of this betrayal of responsibility are enormous and measurable. One study reported in the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* showed a dramatic correlation between the gradual disappearance of "achievement imagery" (defined as "success in competition with a standard of excellence") from American children's readers in this century and a sharp fall in the number of patents issued each year per 1,000,000 population. One might hypothesize a similar relationship over the past two decades between the purging of other bourgeois images from the readers and the concurrent declines in children's reading and analytical skills and increases in drug abuse, school disciplinary problems, adolescent pregnancy and teenage crime.

Censorship in America

In a recent issue of the *Miami Herald*, Marilyn French, a best-selling feminist author whose vicious distortions of the nature of woman and man are circulating in millions of copies of her books, complains that censorship is raging in America:

Our censorship is subtle, and more a matter of interests shared by a powerful group than a conspiracy or planned stance, but it exists.

She's right. If anyone tried to publish an articulate, intel-

lectually mature defense of, say the Reverend Jerry Falwell and his Moral Majority, no New York publisher would ever accept it. It's doubtful that the *Miami Herald*, which devoted almost an entire page to Ms. French's factitious ravings—under a title "World of Words, Where Women's Work Is Never Done"—would print anything which would prove that Ms. French is both dishonest and stupid. Yes, Virginia, there is censorship in America, and those who do the censoring now are crying wolf.

The plain truth, lost to the modern liberal temperament, is that children and youth desperately need guidance from adults on how properly to order their lives. Parents begin this process, to be sure. Yet their counsel must eventually be supported, or at least not undermined, by the wider community which children gradually enter. When a modern society—through its books, educational structure and electronic imagery—fails in such a supportive task, the inevitable result is ruined lives and social decay.

In the service of an arcane liberation theology, modern liberals have scuttled the accumulated wisdom of Western civilization, and they have embraced a mélange of secular cults which pander to every human weakness. In this respect, the replacement of fictional children by anthropomorphic animals in grade-school readers holds an uncanny symbolism, for these misshapen creatures suggest the dehumanizing incoherence of contemporary "adult" liberal culture.

After surveying the resulting wasteland, we can resign ourselves to the termination of social progress, or we can rescue the cultural-transmission process from those who have ravaged it. In every ideological contest, youth are the ultimate prize. For our civilization to begin to heal, we must defend and pass on to our children the historically superior values of honor, personal responsibility, charity, faith, lawfulness, modesty and the centrality of the family. In the face of heckling from worldly fools, we need to recapture in more measured fashion the confidence and moral purpose which motivated the not-unordinary creators of Dick and Jane.

—Allan Carlson

Dr. Carlson has recently joined the staff of The Rockford Institute as assistant to the president.

The Civil War as Seen by a Kangaroo

Thomas Keneally: *Confederates*; Harper & Row; New York.

by Otto J. Scott

Persons who enjoy spaghetti westerns will positively revel in *Confederates*. This Civil War novel, like its cinematic prototypes, teems with dirty, foul-mouthed men masquerading as 19th-century Southern farm boys and their college-trained officers. The movement of the plot is repeatedly held in abeyance by intermittent entanglements between these masqueraders and a series of beauteous, sex-hungry women who are raped, persuaded or purchased into insatiable couplings. As in so many modern fantasies, religion is repeatedly profaned. The author dwells upon blood, stench and death, draws disgustingly close to diarrheal squattings and evacuations, devotes long episodes to ignorant fringe characters who act at random amid incoherent, disheveled settings.

The only major differences between this novel and the usual shoot-em-ups is in its historical pretentiousness. Movie-makers do not ordinarily claim any historical accuracy: they create Victorian-style melodramas in which women—and occasionally men—are stripped naked modern-style. Mr. Keneally seems more earnest. He has read at least thirteen historical works which he lists at the end of his novel. He attaches actual historical names to some of the characters he introduces. He sets his action between the second battle of Manassas and the bloody showdown of Antietam in the summer of 1862.

The publisher has taken Keneally at his own evaluation. There seems reason to suspect, however, that the original decision was made in Sydney, Australia. Once made, it was handsomely followed. The finished product contains colored

endpaper maps of Virginia, 1862. The binding and paper are good by contemporary standards. The type is clean and readable, the price is respectably high; the jacket is high standard. Blurbs on the back of the jacket indicate that *Confederates* is a hit in London: encomiums are cited from *The Observer*, *The Guardian*, *Spectator*, *Books and Bookmen*. All of these gush, but none can equal the burning words of critic David Holloway, quoted on the inside front flap. "Thomas Keneally's *Confederates*," wrote Mr. Holloway in words that I, for one, will find hard to forget, "is a series of pictures of the American Civil War as seen from the Southern States—stark, impressionistic, intimate and at the same time vast. If you can imagine the Bayeux Tapestry refurbished in 20th century prose, this is it."

Presumably most Britons and even some Americans know that the Bayeux Tapestry is a piece of linen 20 inches wide and 321 feet long stored in Bayeux, Normandy, on which are embroidered scenes from the expedition of William the Conqueror to England in 1066. The work is supposed to have been done by William's wife, and there are few more important relics of that great event in English history. To compare the Tapestry to a contemporary novel is praise so sweeping as to take one's breath away. To bestow it upon *Confederates*, however, is to put Mr. Holloway's sanity into question.



The fact is that Keneally's work is, from the first page, one of blatant vulgarity. His central character is named, believe it or not, Bumpass. His wife lives up to that appellation, though unwillingly at first. The Bumpasses are parted by the cruel demands of the war, and the male Bumpass—whose Christian name is Usaph—is plagued throughout the novel by two suspicions: had her uncle slept with Mrs. Bumpass before the Bumpasses were married? Did Mrs. Bumpass sleep with the Yankee painter who visited the Bumpass home while Usaph was away at war? Let me be the first to end any suspense on these scores: Mrs. Bumpass did, indeed, sleep with her uncle. She also cuckolded Bumpass. However, all the other Southern women mentioned in the novel also betrayed their husbands, so the reader is not encouraged to be censorious of Mrs. Bumpass. In fact, even the solitary Northern woman in the novel—a remarkable nurse named Mrs. Whipple—is not notably prudish: she sleeps with the English correspondent of the *London Times* on the occasion of their second meeting, going so far as to visit him in his hotel room despite his faint demurrals. Both the fictional *Times* correspondent and Mrs. Whipple are spies for the North, although Mrs. Whipple is the widow of a loyal Southerner. The *Times* man, who can be assumed to be the hero, is the son of an English peer. He is also a war correspondent who grows to abhor slavery and therefore takes a hand in the war. Mrs. Whipple also abhors slavery, though her reasons are never explained.

The affair between Mrs. Whipple and the Englishman is interrupted by Bumpass reveries, hooligan activities, flashbacks to the rape of Mrs. Bumpass and her seduction by her uncle and other, similar digressions. Throughout the novel discontinuity is used, in the prevailing contemporary novelistic fashion,

Mr. Scott is a frequent contributor to the *Chronicles*.

to create an illusion of depth and complexity in what is essentially a childishly simple story. Historical trappings are provided by the appearance of a figure named "Tom Jackson," who is supposed to represent Stonewall Jackson, one of the two authentic military geniuses produced by the Confederacy. Mr. Keneally's method of "humanizing" General Jackson appears when one of his aides, following his leader at a gallop, reflects: "Tom Jackson was answering some secret urgency, most likely one of those crazy black urgencies that were more inside his bowels than in the outside world." Other details are provided: that Stonewall Jackson was a "hypochondriac" when he taught at military school; that he was a "country boy." This is a somewhat astonishing way to treat so renowned and well-known a figure, even in a novel. It is as if a writer chose to set his tale during the Italian campaign, centered his concentration upon a French foot soldier, and introduced Napoleon mainly in terms of being short, of having been the butt of his fellow cadets in an earlier time, and of being subject to "black urgencies" based on his digestion.

Nevertheless, Mr. Keneally chose a significant personage and an important period: there is no doubt that Jackson rose to fame after his brilliant Shenandoah campaign. Allan Nevins, a more serious observer, wrote: "the legend of his ways—his insistence on action, movement, quick-step, 'bay'nets and grape' always characteristic, but so too his rocklike firmness in defense—possessed the South, and helped animate his soldiers:

'We see him now—the queer slouched hat
Cocked o'er his eyes askew
The shrewd dry smile, the speech so pat
So calm, so blunt, so true.' *

*Allan Nevins, *The War for the Union*, Vol. II (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York), p. 129.

This does not come through in Keneally's version: neither does the incompetence of the Northern General Pope, whom Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee so signally defeated. For that matter, Robert E. Lee does not appear at all. There might as well have been no General McClellan; Lincoln is glimpsed only briefly. Instead the Australian novelist chose a fictional war correspondent for the London *Times*, whom he calls Stearcy. Stearcy is invented to express an anti-Southern position at a time when the *Times* and virtually all upper-class Englishmen were actually bitterly anti-Northern. In general, the British government and its top intellectuals believed the United States

South—about a short war. Within a week after Antietam, Lincoln issued his Proclamation and slaves began to desert the South. Further and deeper still than these results was the realization that the old United States, with its intellectual links to the 18th century and its faith in the power of logic and reason, had ended at Antietam to be replaced by power. This great turn in the road, with all its implications for Americans and other peoples as well, is invisible to a Keneally caught in the lubricities of a Bumpass scenario.

His final pages attempt to bring the reader some information on the eventual fate of the Bumpasses, of Stonewall Jackson's death and other conclusions.

"The best novel about the American Civil War since *The Red Badge of Courage*."

—*Newsweek*

was about to collapse due to inherent flaws. That view was shared by Napoleon III, who decided Mexico was his for the taking. It was shared by most of the chancelleries of Europe, where Americans were held in general contempt as upstarts, democrats, rabble-rousers and demagogues. Von Moltke said the armies in the field in the first year of the Civil War were nothing but "armed mobs." There was a general European sense that Americans had failed to live up to their own rhetoric by not resolving the issue of slavery and tariffs in a civilized manner.

Unfortunately Keneally does not allow the reader to see any of this: his attention is fastened upon loins and rumps and not on higher regions. He even indulges in evil speculations about the marital bed of Stonewall Jackson and his wife. The narrative is brought to a close shortly after Antietam. Once again Keneally fails to tell the audience why this bloody collision was so significant. He is mesmerized by dismembered bodies and amputations, death and gore. Certainly the record verifies these, but it is also clear that it was Antietam which ended all illusions—North or

à la Robert Bolt's fascinating summary in *A Man for All Seasons*. But Keneally lacks Bolt's ability to penetrate the spiritual essence and the moral significance of the historical characters he has chosen to portray, or of the fictional persons he has introduced.

Were it not for the eminence and international character of the publisher one would simply turn from such a travesty of a novel with a shrug. But the number of writers who have turned toward trashing America's history is beginning to assume the proportions of a movement. A *Wall Street Journal* critic recently commented on Gore Vidal's tendency to spread "highly tendentious views of our history calculated to spread ill-founded notions about our past to younger readers lamentably ill-educated in history and inclined to accept a plausible fiction as gospel."* The credulity of younger Americans and their propensity to accept versions of our national history that equate our forbears with nazis and fascists, genocidal

*Edmund Fuller, *Wall Street Journal*, March 23, 1981, p. 22.

maniacs and criminals of all degrees is certainly apt to be even stronger among the young of other nations, who are already prepared to believe the worst of the United States.

Mr. Keneally has done us no favor with *Confederates*. That it is enthusiastically welcomed in London is not good news. The image of Americans as sadistic monsters has already been radiated for too long by too many of our movie-makers. The fact that Keneally has mingled some historical facts with his fiction makes his overall product even more damaging. That few readers will know the difference between his facts and his fiction is merely a reflection of the modern education, which—as far as history is concerned—is propagandistic froth.

History has witnessed previous periods when a nation's record was subjected to general assault. The most notable was the Enlightenment, when first Frenchmen and later foreigners decided

that France had, until the Encyclopedists and Philosophes appeared, indulged mainly in torture, injustice and crime. Russian intellectuals turned against their backgrounds in the period from 1860 to 1917, with results that are now well-known. Europe indulged in similar cynicism, especially in Germany, in the 20's. We seem to be going through a similar period: the United States is being held aloft for a universal scorn. This scorn for the American heritage has been expressed by a number of American writers in recent years. That it is now joined by a popular Australian novelist means that the trend is moving across the entire English-speaking world. If historical precedents hold—and God knows there is reason to hope that they will not—then this period of cynicism will lead to deeper and darker contemporary cynicism on official levels. Keneally, therefore, is more than simply another trendy writer: he and his novel are possible omens of troubles to come. □

(and sainted) wife, will forever be beloved by all readers. The persona's warm affection for his children is evident. Intimate friends and more-intimate friends are easily distinguished by the tone he takes toward each. The scandalous, outrageous manner becomes a fictional device. And while there is something for the critic who wants nonfictional confirmation for matters in Waugh's fiction, there is much less than one would expect from a writer—less than one gets, for instance, in the letters of Hart Crane. Waugh's letters are the means by which a private world was invented in which good spirits, honesty and candor had their scope. Read in that spirit, the "novel" is zany, mad, ill-tempered, compassionate, brilliant and, above all, comic. I feel that I know the persona as well as any of the major characters in his fiction. Further, there is the delight of uncertainty; although I may be all wrong about Evelyn Waugh, having met him only once, I am pretty confident about "E," "Evelyn" and "Bo."

Waugh has been criticized for having a standard of order, in which no one believes any more, by which he judged his age. The criticism implies that there may have been something wrong with him which might have been corrected by a more contemporary standard. The occasion of the publication of these letters and their pertinence to this issue encourages me to take exactly the opposite point of view. It was his antiquated standard of order, coupled with a scintillating style, which gave more than topical meaning to his novels. Most of his fashionable contemporaries have been forgotten. Of his generation Waugh, Graham Greene, Elizabeth Bowen and perhaps Henry Green are most likely to be remembered. Each of them went against the grain of the age, some in ways quite different from Waugh. He had, however, the most solid base upon which to plant the lever by which he moved his world. In his early novels he perceived that the sensational and the bizarre, marks of a decadent society, were more than the results

Spiritual Snobbery & Demi-Intellectual Bluster

The Letters of Evelyn Waugh;
Edited by Mark Amory; Ticknor &
Fields; New Haven, Connecticut.

Ernest Hemingway: Selected Letters;
Edited by Carlos Baker; Charles
Scribner's Sons; New York.

by Joseph Schwartz

Evelyn Waugh defined the letter as a form of conversation: "Write as though you were talking to me." And again, "Look on correspondence as a conversation not a diary." His own letters illustrate his definition. Completely

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unself-conscious, he does not have one eye ogling the future. The letters are immediately present, full of gossip, some verging on the incomprehensible; they are characterized by wit, comedy and sharpness of mind. Comparing him to famous self-conscious letter-writers or to those who used the form for profundities is pointless. Since he refused to use the telephone, we have the letters—840 selected from some 5000.

Although the reader realizes it only after he has finished the first quarter of the collection, the letters taken together form a kind of epistolary novel, but without a beginning, middle or end. A true persona emerges, and his correspondents, many unknown to us now, come forth as characters. He brings everything to life. Laura, his second

of calculated play-acting. A society that has lost or is losing its roots necessarily seeks such sensationalism in order to achieve what Eric Gill called "the sub-human condition of irresponsibility."

The silly passions of that bright young set he caught in their poses were never interesting in and of themselves. Waugh knew from the beginning that the silly passions and the silly people were signs of a decaying society. When asked if his books were intended to be satirical, he honestly replied "No." Knowing that satire flourishes in a stable society which presupposes homogeneous moral standards, he rightly replied that satire had "no place in the Century of the Common Man where vice pays lip service to virtue. The artist's only service to the disintegrated society of today is to create little independent systems of order of his own. I foresee in the dark ages opening that the scribes may play the part of monks after the first barbarian victories." His works are comic with the desperate sense of warning which comedy in a dark age projects. "The beauty of his malice" and other such phrases used to describe his work only serve to limit it, making it comparable to that of Aldous Huxley. Waugh's novels did not produce a sense of shame in his shameless readers: they found him "deliciously amusing," a delicious irony in itself. Their common idiocies defended them from discovering their barbarism.

"Empiric Economic Man . . . The Individual let loose," in Auden's words, is the image of man in the 20th century, and in his splendid isolation he drives "himself about creation/In the closed cab of occupation." Our civilization is homicidal, Maritain remarked, because in the social order "the modern city sacrifices *person* to the *individual*." Grimes, in *Decline and Fall*, speaks for the individual let loose. "I don't believe anyone can be unhappy for long provided one does what one wants when one wants to." One can hear vividly the spoiled, petulant, self-serving tone of voice floating over the bright chatty noise at Archie

Shwert's party. For Waugh this new individual is nothing more than what he wears, whom he knows and what he possesses. At his core there is nothing—a hollow man, not an empty one; the empty man waits to be filled. Since this new individual was all surface, he lent himself naturally to one of the

"Thanks to all this evidence, we can see by his own words that Waugh was a perfectly awful man."

—*Inquiry*

"His handicap was an excessively developed sense of honor."

—*New York Times Book Review*

techniques at which Waugh excelled. Because of his excellent taste, he was able to discriminate sharply among surfaces as a connoisseur tests wines. Puffs of air come from the pricks; the inner life is hollow and without values. Secular religions hurried to fill the void, communism more successfully than the others because, as Chesterton remarked, it had the malicious wisdom to turn into a system what everywhere else is a sort of colossal blunder. When the individual is at the core a handful of dust, fear—his sense of the awesome—is trivialized. "Here we go round the prickly pear." In *The Loved One* even dignity in death is not permitted. Tony in *A Handful of Dust* is quite perplexed by the attitude of the Vicar. "I only wanted to see him about the [funeral] arrangements. He tried to be comforting. It was very painful . . . after all the last thing one wants to talk about at a time like this is religion."

This is a good place to begin to understand Waugh's independent system of order. While it was independent, it was not original. His belief in a traditional order sustained him; he did not allow the modern era to define him, and this was the wisest decision he ever made for his writing. Because of that belief, he retained his right to interpret events without coming to terms with the age. He lived "entirely in the past."

Like a physician in the midst of disease, he successfully separated himself from it in order to diagnose it. This is not escapism; it requires a kind of heroism which appears to the unaware as cantankerousness. Such detachment is really a sign of the confidence that comes from belief. "In order not to be

scandalized," Flannery O'Connor wrote, "one has to have a whole view of things." This perspective gave Waugh a center of coherence, and it made his work coherent. His writings are a fundamentally religious assault (sometimes savage and violent) on modernism, because it failed to nourish itself from the basic roots of Western civilization. Above all else, the Catholic Church—"a complete way of life"—was for him the chief bulwark against the crippling heresies of modernism. He committed himself to the Church without reservation (daily Mass, the whole bit), recognizing that he had found the one thing that gave meaning to everything else. "The question should be 'What am I giving to God?' Nothing less than complete abandonment is any good." Muriel Spark, a novelist he admired, had one of her characters put it in a way Waugh would have applauded:

Well, either religious faith penetrates everything in life or it doesn't. There are some experiences which make nonsense of all separation of sacred from profane—they seem childish. Either the whole of life is unified under God, or everything falls apart.

The major writers of our century have had a deep sense of things falling apart: Eliot, Yeats, Pound, Faulkner, Hemingway, Fitzgerald. Having that perception during the modern period is

itself part of the definition of a major writer. For the past one hundred years such writers have been repelled by secular modernism and its celebration of the Empiric Economic Man. The Individual let loose. To hold firmly to a sense of the real, writers were forced to be, consciously or otherwise, anti-progressive, antiliberal, even reactionary. Lionel Trilling, who held impeccable liberal credentials, wrote, with astonishment, I think, that "liberal ideology has produced a large literature of social and political protest, but not, for several decades, a single writer who commands our real literary admiration" (*The Liberal Imagination*). Later, in *Commentary* (1962), there was "no literary figure of the very first rank . . . who, in his work, makes use of or gives credence to liberal or radical ideas."

Since for Waugh the moral, social and aesthetic orders were inextricably intertwined, Christian Humanism, his independent system of order, made possible his artistic critique of the secular city and its ideology. To understand that critique it is necessary to understand his fierce religiosity—but in a specific way. The solidity he found in Peter's Church he also sought in some social system. Since he was not a systematic political thinker, one must work by indirection. He looked to the past because he perceived in a past social order, over-idealized by him, what he missed in the present. His sense of a class society, much like the later Auden's, was based fundamentally on the timeless idea that man's definitions (class being only one of them) protect him from anarchy and give him a secure sense of where he is and what he must do. Each being has its nature and place. Invidious comparisons between classes (not merely natural envy) were, after all, the by-product of the Age of the Common Man, the mass man. Waugh, like so many writers of the time, had a connatural sense of the danger implied in such a view. He was essentially conservative, but only conventionally a snob, which he defined

as being "happiest in the company of the European upper-classes." His being a snob, and he was one, has been over-emphasized in an effort to understand him and quite unfairly related to his political instincts. Snobbery, like vanity and bad manners, is characteristic of liberal and conservative alike. (Many of my academic colleagues are liberal snobs.) At least his snobbery was modified by his religion. "I know I am awful. But how much more awful I should be without the Faith." One should also remember that in England "Catholicism is predominantly the religion of the poor." No, the snobbery is a smoke screen. His political intuitions, which caused savage, if infrequent, jibes at liberalism, were based on something more than snobism.

"For me Christianity begins with the counter-reformation." That sentence appearing on a quickly written postcard provides one of the keenest insights into his system of order. Historically, it was Catholic Christianity, not Protestant Christianity, that was identified with the riches of culture after the rupture. Let me explain. Like many converts to Catholicism in the 20th century, Waugh made two discoveries, not one. First, and most important, he discovered Divine Revelation in the Church and the presence of the Lord: "the delight of membership of the Household, of having your chair at the table, a place laid, the bed turned down, of the love



& trust, whatever their family bickerings, of all Christendom." Orthodoxy, as for Chesterton, had not only told him the truth, it had proved itself a truth-telling thing. Second, he discovered the storage place of truths about the nature of man from Classical times to the present which the Catholic tradition had preserved from the assaults of history. The Church treasured, in Thomas Molnar's words, "the most accurate set of statements that one may hold about man's nature, about the balance between faith and reason, the interior and exterior man, the condition on which society rests, human relations." This is a phenomenon of conversion, especially in the last two centuries. It meant for Waugh that in addition to the teachings of Christ, he found the repository of the enduring wisdom of the world, that which C. S. Lewis named the *Tao*. Thus, when Waugh tells Nancy Mitford, one of his most valued friends, never to use the word "progressive" when writing to him, he knew what he meant and meant what he said. That statement is a much more profound critical insight into his social views than the more often quoted, "I have never voted in a general election as I have never found a Tory stern enough to command my respect." It was his illative sense that sternly warned him against such particulars as the welfare state and the labor governments. "I am weary about having been consistently right in all my political predictions for ten years. It is so boring seeing it all happen for the second time after one has gone through it in imagination." While he was in many ways apolitical, the need for a sense of coherent order that he felt at the center of his being was his strongest sensibility.

The central fact needed for an essential understanding of Waugh's fiction was the discovery that his independent system of order was liberating. Standing on what he perceived as a firm base, he felt free to take on all comers. The enterprise was comic, not apocalyptic.

even though catastrophe was around every corner. He anticipated all but one: he could not have known how Vatican II would knock "the guts out of me." It was a fine trial, and perhaps a necessary one, lest he give more emphasis to the nonessentials than they deserved. He clung to his faith doggedly if without joy. Perhaps the absence of joy would have been temporary. We will never know. As if to lend a well-earned grace to a true friend on his parting, the Lord called him on Easter Sunday, April 10, 1966.

* * *

One is still best advised to trust the tale, not the teller. Thus, with respect to our understanding of Hemingway the artist, these letters are of limited value; they appear to widen the distance between the man and his fiction. It is obvious that Hemingway did not have one eye on the future when writing them. He was sincere in advising Scribner's to "take great care that nobody" got hold of them. They are "often libelous, always indiscreet, often obscene and many of them would make great trouble." They were written, I suspect, as a way of keeping a link with the worlds from which he often retreated: "I am very shy." They served as well as a way of unloading the burdens of his psyche without a presence in the room for whom he would have had to put on one of his few masks. From well over 6000 letters Baker has selected some 600, meant to be typical of the periods of his life. It is impossible to say how representative they actually are. It appears as if the dark side of Hemingway is less represented than it might have been. One can guess that his wives are spared his private comments on them. For the most part they are *ad persona*, as a familiar letter should be, hurriedly written and full of dated detail; they were not intended to be more than that. Yet, taken together, they do provide some new information about the personality if not the artist, except insofar

as the personality stands in some relationship (behind?) to the artist. What we have is "the figure under the carpet."

Most evidently, the letters present a man of myriad contradictions: the shy braggart, the sentimental bully, the generous and ruthless friend, the truthful liar, the courageous hypochondriac, the patriotic anarchist, the superstitious believer. Vocationed into the lonely world of words, he lusted for the world of action. Overbearing with sycophants, he was deferential to those from whom he might gain something. Proudly defiant of death, his nights were filled with fear. A passionate lover of life, he was a suicide. "A man without any ambition, except to be champion of the world. . . the only thing I ever wanted to be." This complex dance of tangled opposites is the key to understanding his much-misunderstood politics, a subject which looms large in the letters. What is one to make of a man, "being a capitalist," who prayed for the election of Coolidge and cast his only vote ever for President for Eugene Debs? A man who got "conservative in politics" because "we'd be horses asses if we weren't" and who kissed the Cuban flag, post-Castro, to prove he was a true Cuban? A man who felt revolutions inevitably got corrupted, and who believed completely [if not finally] in the historical necessity of the Cuban revolution? Scott Donaldson (*By Force of Will*) provides a summary, true for the most part, but too neat by half.

From adolescence to old age, his ideas were remarkably consistent. To give them a contemporary label, they were the ideas of conservative Republicanism, and were probably ingrained in Hemingway as a young man by his Republican parents and especially by the admired paternal grandfather who never in his life sat at a table knowingly with a democrat.

First off, it is necessary to understand that in the intellectual sense of the term, he had no politics. John Dos Passos was correct in saying that Hemingway

had no consistent political ideas. "Don't ever ask me to think. I don't think." The strain of anti-intellectualism, so evident in the fiction, is strong in the letters. He had, at best, political instincts or intuitions, strikingly primitive and often sensible. He was a *naïf politique*, a child in the abstract world of concerns for the commonweal, at times a valuable defense against fads.

As for your hoping that the Leftward Swing etc has a very definite significance for me that is so much horse-shit. I do not follow the fashions in politics, letters, religion etc. . . . There is no left and right in writing. There is only good and bad writing.*

The Green Hills of Africa made it clear that he could not serve society or de-



mocracy or anything else. The writer must be alone in a secret and tormenting place which admitted no loyalties except to art. "The hardest job in the world" is to write honestly about human beings; to take politics as a way out "was cheating." A "true work of art endures for-

*All quotes from the letters are verbatim, including errors in spelling and punctuation.

ever; no matter what its politics." The artist must be a Gypsy, "an outlyer"; he owes no allegiance to any government. "I'm no goddamned patriot nor will I swing to left or right." A writer can be "class conscious only if his talent is limited. If he has enough talent all classes are his province." It is important to remember that at this time "Everyone" was trying to force him to "become a Communist or have a Marxian viewpoint," or he would have no friends and be left alone. He did not dread being alone, and called himself "an anarchist. . . . I don't believe and can't believe in too much government." And again, "I can't stand *any* bloody government." He explained to Dos Passos that he could not become a communist because he hated tyranny, and tyranny was associated with the fact of government itself. It is not surprising that the paranoia he developed later in life took the form of being pursued by government agents; his later years had a Kafka-like quality.

Curiously enough, his instinctive political theory reminds one a bit of William Graham Sumner's. "First I would look after myself and do my work. Then I would care for my family. Then I would help my neighbor. But the state I care nothing for. All the state has ever meant to me is unjust taxation. . . . I believe in the absolute minimum of government." As for Marxism, "the race is older than an economic system." When challenged, he could speak of being a "good American" and of having "gone to bat for my country as often as most." But just as often he could say "the hell with it." He was no patriot as he defined the term, "loyal to any existing order of government." The sense of home was not defined by national boundaries. "No unit larger than the village can function justly." Among his novels, only *The Torrents of Spring* and *To Have and Have Not* are set in the United States, and they are among his poorest works. After Henry James and Edith Wharton, he is probably the American

writer who lived for the longest time abroad. Because he had experienced fascism firsthand in Italy, it was the object of his special hatred and contempt. Communism, on the other hand, was "tripe." He could not become one "because I believe in only one thing: liberty." One comment on it was as much a commentary on American fellow-travelers as it was on communism itself: "Now they want you to swallow communism as if it were an elder Boys Y.M.C.A. conference."

He had no respect for political systems or for politicians. Franklin D. Roosevelt was "The Paralytic Demagogue," a "rich and spoiled paralytic," a "bore" for whose death we should be grateful. Herbert Hoover was "The Syphilitic Baby." The New Deal was

"some sort of Y.M.C.A. show. Starry eyed bastards spending money that somebody will have to pay. Everybody in our town quit work to go on relief." Senator Joseph McCarthy was belligerently challenged to a boxing match. Harry Truman was an "Unsuccessful Haberdasher." He would not vote for Dwight Eisenhower because Richard Nixon was on the ticket, but Nixon was "useful" in the Alger Hiss case.

The only political label that can be made to fit Hemingway, and it is not a perfect fit, would be Libertarian. (Or perhaps the one Henry Adams devised for himself, Conservative-Christian-Anarchist.) Hemingway's politics, such as they were, were based on the Libertarian's dream of a Golden Age. There things were perfect; the individual was

In the forthcoming issue of *Chronicles of Culture*:

M.M. & the Conservative Ethos of Refinement

That conservative men of letters have not been the ones to make the moral life which is currently displacing liberal permissiveness should sober rather than irritate us. Things are changing because of the private grievances, wounded pride and personal hopes of countless millions. The results of these changes may not always please an advocate of moderation or one who craves the *juste milieu*. But few if any significant historical changes have transpired in accordance with the Golden Mean—in doing our sums it may be helpful to keep this in mind.

—from the comment by Paul Gottfried

Also:

Opinions & Views—Commendables—In Poem—Parables—Value of Money—The American Proscenium—Stage—Screen—Art—Music—Literature—Correspondence—Liberal Culture—Journalism—Social Register

not inhibited by government. The natural, innocent man, the Jeffersonian ideal, lived in harmony with nature, free from social constraints. "In whatever time I had been born I could have taken care of myself if I were not killed." Perhaps that place still existed in the forest or along a stream or in the mountains—there you feel free. There the wine was better and the air purer. Hunting and fishing were heroic tasks. It was a land of men without women, since women imply family, society and the responsibility that comes with maturity. One slept peacefully at night without the light, and if one dreamed, it was a dream of peace, not of the nocturnal terrors of civilization. Huck Finns abounded, having made their successful break; Peter Pans were there too, never having had to grow up into a frightening world of terrible choices. In this pastoral paradise, "We lay with our heads in the shade and looked up into the trees. It was good."

Yet, for a brief time, Hemingway played Quixote: Spain. Why did this apolitical person get involved? The letters are helpful on this point. Spain was where the action was, and Spain was his home town. There the earth abided; the bulls ran well. Hemingway became patriotic because of his proprietary feelings for Spain. "There is no use argueing the history of the Spanish Republic now. But it was something I believed in deeply long before it was an American Communist cause." If a nation could be characterized by a single quality, Spain was courage. There were two sides to the war, and he might easily have chosen either side, but one side was backed by his old nemesis, Mussolini. The committed antifascist found himself leaning toward the left, encouraged also by the drift of the times. The only public speech he ever delivered was at this time to the communist-dominated League of American Writers. Initially, he went to Spain as an "anti-war correspondent" to have a hand in preventing the coming of World War II. Then, as a humanitarian, he raised money for

ambulances. Then, finding himself in the midst of war and itching to play soldier (Italy, France, the Caribbean), he picked his side. The propaganda he wrote at the time reads now like a forced will. After a series of Loyalist defeats in 1938, he made his separate peace. He had collected his handsome fees as a correspondent, but, far more important, he had the material he needed for his next novel. Having courted him carefully during this time, the left had reason to wait in hope for the book that was to come. *For Whom the Bell Tolls* was, however, true to his political instincts and apolitical for its readers. The novel was concerned with Hemingway's persistent themes—the love-hate relationship with war, with love and death and hope. The left was outraged by what it considered a betrayal. It seemed to those at the *New Masses* and the *Daily Worker* that Hemingway had been a tourist after all. His only excursion into politics wound up with both right and left despising him for different, but equally wrong, reasons. "Are you a commu-

nist?" Robert Jordan was asked. "No, I am an anti-fascist."

Perhaps the label invented by Henry Adams, Conservative-Christian-Anarchist, is the best after all. Of course they were radically different. Adams was fascinated by politics, while Hemingway was apolitical. Adams was a true intellectual, while Hemingway was suspicious of all intellectuals. Yet they do share some persistent, significant strains characteristic of the American political vision. Both despaired over the possibility of an integrated, honest political order. Both were contemptuous of politicians, if for widely different reasons. Both were suspicious of political reform. Both had a pastoral dream which significantly affected their thinking about the social order. For Adams it was the memory of Quincey and the South Sea Islands. For Hemingway it was the experience of bucolic places where the demands of civilization were minimal. Both were, in the end, melancholy regarding prospects for the future. The comparison had better stop here. □

More on Existential Neuroses

Barry Hannah: *Ray*; Alfred A. Knopf; New York.

Milan Kundera: *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*; Alfred A. Knopf; New York.

W. M. Spackman: *A Presence with Secrets*; Alfred A. Knopf; New York.

by Christina Murphy

It is one of the clichés of contemporary literary criticism that alienation is the condition of modern man. From exactly what man is alienated remains an issue of debate, but the most gener-

ally proffered response is from a sense of meaning of life, or that he is burdened with an existential neurosis, as Ludwig Binswanger once described the dilemma. The existential neurosis or malaise, in Kierkegaard's terms, seems to be the focus of much modern literature. Some would argue that this is an indication that modern literature is effete, that it has exhausted much of its subject matter. Others would contend that it is literature representing life—life in the latter half of the 20th century when the idealism of the 19th century has been shattered and realism requires a look at life through less than rose-colored glasses.

The condition of modern man is the topic of the books by Hannah, Kundera and Spackman, and what to do

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about man's troubled fate is their central concern. The vitality, or degree, of an author's moralism is reflected in the strength of the solutions he proposes for life's seemingly hopeless struggles. Thus Hannah seems the least "moralistic" of the three authors in that he proposes no solutions—in fact, he delights in challenging the reader himself to design a solution for the decay and chaos in which Ray finds himself. Ray is a doctor in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, a veteran of fraternity parties, early youthful idealism and the Vietnam War. Characteristically—and not surprisingly, since the plot is an old one—Ray went off to war as a patriotic youth,

"Ray has moral tone."

"Barry Hannah is marvelously rude."

watched his buddies blown to smithereens, blew a number of the enemy to smithereens himself and came home jaded, disillusioned and unable to find much purpose to his existence. Back in Tuscaloosa, Ray settles in as the town doctor and, as the novel opens, proceeds to give us a running commentary on Tuscaloosa in the 1980's.

Quickly we see that Tuscaloosa is an emblem of all modern life, and, further, an emblem of the absurdity of human existence itself. The violence of Tuscaloosa is no less terrible than the violence of Vietnam, it is just more subtle. Individuals rape, beat, murder—the more open and gross the acts, the more likely society's condemnation. To Hannah, this is only the surface of the perversity that pervades the modern era—the scab, so to speak, on a much deeper wound, that of the purposelessness of existence. Characters in the novel struggle desperately to feel something of value, something that completes their existences and gives them direction. Instead, they feel the rather pointless emotions of lust and anger, greed and despair. There is a hunger in all of them

to be more than they are and to experience something that lends life a degree of sacredness amidst the profane. They all fail in the quest: Ray acquires the American dream—a devoted wife, children, a huge house, a respected, middle-class profession—only to find himself in adulterous liaisons feeling the voice of conscience dim and be replaced by the unanswerable voice of "Why not?" His friend, Charlie, feels the same pointlessness as he drinks and chases women: he tells Ray on a hunting trip that if he doesn't kill something here he's going to have to kill his wife. Ray is empathetic to Charlie's troubles and knows how he feels, but can offer

—Village Voice

—New York Times Book Review

no advice, for Ray, too, is enmeshed in the endless drifting; Ray, too, knows the hypocrisy of trying to pretend one's own life has meaning when, in truth, one knows that it doesn't.

Ray's problem is compounded by the fact that he is the town's doctor and so encounters more of the results of violence and despair than the average person. Murderers, rapists and those who beat their wives and children are brought into the emergency room; Ray encounters them all and sees that they are but exaggerated portraits of himself. Occasionally he rises to what, for him, is an ethical stance—moral outrage at a man in intensive care who feels no remorse at having beaten his wife and several of his children to death and who vows, when he gets out of the hospital, to get the rest of them. Ray's response—to pull the plug on the man's respirator and send the bastard on his way to hell.

That Ray can even feel a modicum of outrage is in itself a good sign, yet a pallid one, for Ray himself is a product of the very amorality that cripples his era, a man disjointed in time, who has

dreams of the Civil War in which he sees that the same ideals for which those men fought were shattered by their war, leaving them stranded in time, isolated from hope, left with the pure knowledge that they would never see life again with a clear sense of purpose. At the novel's end, Ray turns forty and tells us he will be all right—a declaration the reader may or may not find convincing. If Ray means "all right" in the sense that he will be able to continue drinking and engaging in a succession of nameless, faceless, sexual encounters, the reader can accept this; if he means "all right" in the sense that he sees the absurdity of his predicament yet still can function, this, too, the reader can accept. But if Ray means "all right" in any deeper spiritual or ethical sense, this the reader will find hard to accept, for despite Hannah's brilliant depictions and characterizations, despite his excellent and apparently logical rationalizations for Ray's malaise, it is apparent that Ray is guilty of what both Hemingway and the existentialists have called bad faith—the refusal to confront the consequences of one's choices and, on an even deeper level, the failure to recognize one's freedom to make choices. Ray, and perhaps Hannah, would have us believe that the weight of the world, the irrationality and absurdity of life itself, is responsible for Ray's ethical demise when, in truth, each step toward corruption, or at least dissolution, is Ray's own—including his first adulterous liaison, which convinces him that true love and commitment to one person in the bond of marriage are not for him and thus are, like everything else in life, disappointing and meaningless. It is definitely easier for Ray to come to this logically flawed conclusion than it is for him to recognize, on the deepest level, that he is weak-willed. He prefers, throughout the novel, his immediate personal gratification, whatever the cost or consequences, to the more difficult striving for long-term satisfactions and the more arduous demands of an ethical stance.

What do *The Lincoln Review*, *Saturday Review*,
Continuity, *Education*, *Harper's*,
The American Journal of Jurisprudence, *Renascence*,
Modern Age, *Interpretation*, *The Cultural Watchdog*,
Policy Review and *Manufacturing Engineering*
have in common?

Their editors contribute to *Chronicles of Culture*.*

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*Allan C. Brownfeld (Assistant Editor, *The Lincoln Review*), Joshua Gilder (Associate Editor, *Saturday Review*), Paul Gottfried (Editor, *Continuity* and Editor, *Modern Age*), Edward A. Wynne (Editor, *Education*), Tom Bethel (Washington Editor, *Harper's*), Charles E. Rice (Editor, *The American Journal of Jurisprudence*), Joseph Schwartz (Editor, *Renascence*), Will Morrissey (Associate Editor, *Interpretation*), Louis Ehrenkrantz (Editor, *The Cultural Watchdog*), John O'Sullivan (Editor, *Policy Review*), Philip F. Lawler (Managing Editor, *Policy Review*), and Gary Vasilash (Associate Editor, *Manufacturing Engineering*).

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**Chronicles
Culture**

To fall into dissolution is easy; it's easier still to blame one's fall on the nature of the world. In "Babylon Revisited," Fitzgerald recognized what Ray and Hannah, apparently do not, that the one inestimable and irreplaceable quality for each individual life and each generation is character. In the absence of character, there is only the moral dissolution, aimlessness and frustrated violence Ray describes and Hannah so brilliantly captures.

For those who prefer to say, "Yes, life is absurd, but can't we keep on smiling anyway, covering over our doubts and fears with gala romance and happy little self-deceptions?" there is Milan Kundera's *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, which is about exactly what its title suggests: laughter and forgetting as the only antidotes to the pain of confronting the absurdities of life. Kundera's book is actually a chronicle of many things—part autobiography of his years in Czechoslovakia during the communist invasions, part a chronicle of many fantastic events that happen to many fanciful characters in the novel, and part forced and strained philosophizing: sermonettes amidst depictions of the irrationality, the cruelty and even the banality of human existence.

Kundera would like us to believe that this is a "heavy" book which deals with many, many issues of great philosophical complexity, when, in fact, it is a confused book, a pastiche of characters who appear once and disappear, of fanciful episodes and realistic ones, of a desire for political commentary together with a decidedly apolitical view that nothing very much will change in human history because of the nature of man himself.

The point that Kundera seems to be endeavoring to make is that man must both laugh and forget in order to maintain his sanity and his will to go on. A key example of this thesis occurs in a scene in which a group of schoolgirls is enacting a bit of dialogue from Ionesco's *Rhinoceros*, a darkly absurdist drama about what fools human beings are. In the midst of the scene, a prank by one of the schoolgirls sends all of the students and the teacher into gales of laughter. The laughter becomes so strong that soon the teacher and the student actors rise above the floor, float on air, and then disappear forever into the heavens—a form of glee-induced Ascension. In a not-too-subtle fashion, Kundera seems to be suggesting that laughter is the only remedy which will raise man above the absurdity of the

human condition. Any rational person knows, however, that this is a fairy-tale approach to the very real anguish which accompanies human life. Only in the minds of novelists do people laugh themselves above all that threatens human equanimity; only in children's books are such real problems so easily solved.

Except for the scene with Ionesco's drama, there are very few parts of *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* in which Kundera's characters are laughing. Most seem as lost and confused as the grotesque characters of Hannah's Ray; most, too, follow Ray's pattern of trying to escape the pain of loneliness and personal failure through sexual encounters and the temporary illusions of lustful passion. Neither do the characters seem particularly concerned with forgetting. Most have key incidents in their lives which they recall and relive; many would prefer their past to their present. Even Kundera rejects his own premise of the joys of forgetting by writing a book in which he seeks to set the historical record straight. He lambastes the communists for erasing history and rewriting it for their own purposes and then presents his own recollections and interpretations of what occurred during the communist invasions of Czechoslovakia and his exile. Further, he seems determined that his readers remember history and its lessons so that the mistakes of the past will not be repeated. The book seems at odds with its thesis, and consequently much of its direction is lost. The style of *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* is sometimes interesting, sometimes even enchanting, but many sections of the novel are simply tedious and boring. Poor editing makes many books seem more substantial and significant than they are, and Kundera's novel is no exception. What is presented as a chronicle of the post-World War II era, an exhaustive, probing analysis of what occurred and why, proves, instead, to be mere ramblings with occasional interesting interstices and a few insights of value.

In the Mail

The Whole Truth About Man: John Paul II to University Faculties and Students; edited by James V. Schall, S.J.; St. Paul Editions; Boston, Massachusetts. A collection of speeches and homilies given by Pope John Paul II on such subjects as the privileges of youth, knowing Christ, the mission of Catholic universities and the problems of science and faith.

Christianity and Politics by James V. Schall, S.J.; St. Paul Editions; Boston, Massachusetts. A serious, intellectually sophisticated look at the possibilities, theology and dangers of a Christian political theory.

Christianity and Life by James V. Schall, S.J.; Ignatius Press; San Francisco. A careful consideration of the Christian, and Catholic, approach to human life and an analysis of the implications of artificial conceptions.

Faith According to Saint John of the Cross by Karol Wojtyla; Ignatius Press; San Francisco. The doctoral thesis of John Paul II, first written in 1948, treating the metaphysical and psychological nature of faith in the writings of St. John.

The one saving grace of Kundera's book is that it is not pretentious and that he at least makes a sincere effort to examine issues and paradoxes that others may find interesting. The same cannot be said for W. M. Spackman's *A Presence with Secrets*. Spackman's novel reads like a Barbara Cartland dime-store romance, yet it is dotted with foreign phrases, literary allusions to exceedingly obscure works and authors, and echoes of other writers Spackman must have read and admired—notably Henry James. The novel gives us the romantic life of Hugh Tatnall, a character notably devoid of interest. We watch Hugh go through romances from youth to adulthood, from freewheeling independence to settled maturity. Since Spackman shows us nothing of value or interest along the way, one can legitimately ask about Hugh's life, "so what?" The book is excessively sentimental and needlessly obscure; its style is laborious and unnecessarily complex—as if Henry James had somehow been commissioned to write a love story for Harlequin romances. It is sad to see such works published when there must be greater talents than Spackman at work in American letters.

For critics and readers alike who admire style and excellent portraiture, Hannah's *Ray* is a work of genius. His characters, so broken by existence and so lost in their own confusion, strike chords of responsiveness in the modern existentialist drifter, for these characters are but bits and pieces of the giant riddle of existence itself. The depth of Hannah's portrayals, the complexity and insights he can achieve in 113 pages, vs. 228 pages for Kundera and 161 pages for Spackman, bespeak an author who will likely be recognized as one of the most significant of his generation. It is the power of Hannah's writing in *Ray* which captivates and, at the same time, appalls. It is the power of communication, this precision of style and excellence of form, which separate *Ray* from the mediocrity represented

by *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* and *A Presence with Secrets*. Kundera and Spackman could do well in looking to Hannah, for he has outclassed them in capturing the spirit of life in the anxiety-ridden modern era. But hardly anyone can look to him for the answers and illuminations that we expect from writers who, by dint of their moral impulse and responsibility, have

become the grand explicators and interpreters of their epoch, generation, country or culture. Subhumanity, however insightfully depicted, will always remain a lower level of both civilization and the contemporary human condition. It would be interesting to see Hannah's abilities measured against an attempt to deal with human beings and humanness. □

Why Terrorism?

Claire Sterling: *The Terror Network*; Holt, Rinehart & Winston; New York.

by Ernst Halperin

This book has created a sensation in Washington because it challenges a basic assumption of our foreign policy—i.e. that at least in Europe, if not elsewhere, the Soviet Union and the United States have a common interest in stability in order to maintain the status quo.

Claire Sterling does not give a systematic history of the various groups that make up the international terrorist movement. For that one has to go to accounts of terrorism in individual countries, such as Yonah Alexander's *Terrorism in Italy* and Jillian Becker's study of the Bader-Meinhof gang, *Hitler's Children*. As her title indicates, Miss Sterling is mainly concerned with the links between these groups. She demonstrates, first, that these links go so far beyond occasional contacts as to constitute a veritable international network, and second, that this network is sponsored by the Soviets. Moscow provides both arms and training to the terrorist groups. Extensive training facilities are maintained in the Soviet Union itself as well as in its European satellites and client states, Cuba and South

Yemen. In spite of substantial ideological differences, the Soviet relationship with the second major sponsor of international terrorism, Colonel Qaddafi of Libya, is one of friendly cooperation, not rivalry.

Minor errors are well nigh inevitable in a book of this scope, and one might quarrel with some of Sterling's assessments. However, the factual evidence which she presents is incontrovertible. It is not new, though, and it was all already known to Western intelligence services and had been published in books and newspapers before. It points to an inescapable conclusion: Soviet sponsorship of international terrorism is on such a scale that it can only be explained as resulting from an explicit, high-level policy decision of the Soviet leadership. That is the point at which many balk: they accept the evidence but reject the conclusion and its truthfulness. Among them we find not only the dwindling crowd of those who still have illusions about the nature of the Soviet regime, but also hard-nosed analysts who have spent a lifetime in Soviet studies, and experienced policymakers, statesmen with impeccably anticommunist credentials.

Miss Sterling is puzzled by this "official flight from reality," by the stubborn refusal of Western governments, including our own, to put the pieces together and draw the unavoidable inferences from inexorably accumulating evidence. She asks herself, "Why?" and

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responds, "I do not know why."

We have an answer.

Hard-nosed analysts and experienced policy-makers refuse to draw the unavoidable conclusion from incontrovertible evidence because this conclusion seems incompatible with their assessment of current Soviet leaders as rational human beings. Miss Sterling's conclusion does not appear to make sense even from the Soviets' own point of view. Are the Soviets backing international terrorism in order to bring about world revolution? Are they seeking to establish a communist system encompassing the entire world and controlled by them? One can only impute this intention to them if one assumes that they have learnt absolutely nothing from their own experience, from the history of communism since World War II. Yugoslavia in 1948, Hungary in 1956, the Sino-Soviet split, Czechoslovakia in 1968, Afghanistan in 1980—these events all show that only the physical presence of the Soviet Army can ensure Soviet control, and in Poland even that does not seem to be enough.

It would be impossible for the Soviets to keep the entire world under military control. A communist world would be an Orwellian world of three or more communist superstates facing each other in constant war. Stalin was not happy to see communism come to power in China, because he knew he could not control it, and there is no reason to believe that the present rulers of the Soviet Union are less realistic than Stalin. Of course we do not deny that Soviet policy is expansionist, that the Soviets will move, directly or by proxy, into countries where there is a power vacuum—provided they have a reasonable chance of maintaining control. But a deliberate policy of expansion is a far cry from a policy of world revolution through the action of terrorist groups.

Even assuming that the Soviet leaders might have the impossible dream of world revolution—would they then regard the contemporary terrorist move-



ment as an appropriate instrument? Moscow has always insisted on rigid ideological orthodoxy and, above all, on unconditional loyalty to the Soviet flag in the ranks of the world communist movement. But terrorists are ideologically heterogeneous. Some are openly critical of the Soviet system, some are Trotskyists, and still others—the IRA Provos, many of the Palestinians and other Moslems—are indoctrinated inadequately if at all. An even more important argument against the use of these groups as an instrument of world revolution is that, however great their nuisance value, few of them have any chance of seizing power. Most of them have no mass base whatsoever, others have only a narrow geographical or ethnic base, and the result of their terrorist activity is more likely to be the emergence of a rightist dictatorship than a communist regime.

The notion that the Soviets are sponsoring international terrorism as an instrument of world revolution is unrealistic. It presupposes that the Soviet leaders are incapable of learning from experience, or that the conflicts between communist states are elaborate ruses by which a monolithic world communist leadership seeks to mislead the West. In brief, the notion smacks of paranoia. That is why it is rejected by our hard-nosed Soviet analysts and experienced policy-makers—and rightly so.

All the same, there *is* abundant evidence that the Soviets are sponsoring international terrorism. They must have some reason for this other than the promotion of world revolution. What can this other reason be?

The case of Spain provides a clue. The Spanish government recently accused the Soviets of fomenting the terrorism of the Basque ETA and other leftist-extremist groups in order to provoke a military coup, because under a dictatorial regime Spain would not be accepted into NATO and the European community. This is no wild, baseless accusation. As Miss Sterling relates in her book, Spanish intelligence has observed contacts between ETA terrorists and KGB agents since 1978, and in 1979 the Soviet foreign minister offered his Spanish colleague a Soviet promise "to help Spain fight ETA" in exchange for a Spanish pledge not to join NATO. This was, of course, a tacit admission that Moscow had at least some measure of control over the Basque terrorists.

One may ask why Moscow should consider it important to prevent Spain from joining NATO, since the American bases—the crucial element in military cooperation with the West—are already there and will remain there with or without a formal alliance. And what possible objection could Moscow have to economic cooperation between Spain and Western Europe, or to the presence of Spanish representatives in the European Parliament? The answer is that *any* further consolidation of Western Europe is threatening to Moscow, because *Moscow has failed to stabilize and consolidate its own realm*, the European empire it acquired in the wake of World War II. The events in Poland have now made this startlingly clear. The Soviet leaders know that pro-Soviet communist leadership would not survive the withdrawal of the Soviet Army anywhere in their European empire. East European populations are disaffected, held in check only by the proximity of the Soviet Army and memories

of 1956 and 1968.

East Germany, outwardly the most loyal and docile of all the satellites, is particularly unreliable. Here is a country whose inhabitants refer to the currency of neighboring West Germany as *Wirkliches Geld*—Real Money. "What is that in real money?" they ask when the price of some scarce and costly item is quoted in East German marks. It is often claimed that no one in Europe, not even the Germans themselves, really

while, new successes were scored on the political front. In Spain there was a peaceful transition from rightist dictatorship to parliamentary democracy. In Portugal, democratization followed a violent revolution and the failure of a communist attempt to seize power.

The Soviets could not hide these developments from the subjects of their East European empire. It proved impossible to block the flow of news from the West by radio and, in the border dis-

destabilizers. Gone are the days when Moscow could order them to conduct a campaign of disruptive strikes and riots, as they did in Italy and France in 1947-48. These parties have had to choose between revolutionary politics and playing the electoral game. In order to retain their working-class electorate, they had to opt for the latter; this constitutes a little-noticed triumph of Western, capitalist democracy which has managed to tame and integrate into the system even the Communist Parties, once denounced by the French socialist Léon Blum as "*foreign* nationalist parties."—traitors to their countries.

Unable to use the West European Communist Parties as instruments of destabilization, Moscow logically turned to the terrorist groups. Soviet support of Third World terrorism had already begun in the early 1960's as part of a policy to woo the Arabs. As is made clear in Miss Sterling's book, the deci-

"Sterling's book adds up to little more than a brash popularization of the views of the rightwing think tanks that spawned current New Right ideology."

—*Village Voice*

desires the reunification of Germany. Those who assert this forget, or deliberately overlook, one not-unimportant population group—the inhabitants of East Germany—who are kept from joining their fellow Germans in the West by high walls, barbed wire, electrified fences and minefields. That is what the Soviet leaders see in their own empire. Looking westward, on the other side of the Elbe River, they see stable, prosperous democracies.

When the Marshall Plan was announced in 1947, Soviet propaganda claimed that it would result in the domination of Europe by American corporations, bringing unemployment and pauperization. Instead, "Marshallization," as Soviet propaganda termed it, proved to be a boon beyond all expectations to those on whom it was "inflicted." Western Europe developed into an economic superpower. For two decades the rate of growth in Western Europe surpassed that of the most prosperous decades of the 19th century. Living standards rose to approximate, and in some cases to surpass, those in the United States. This took place in peace and democracy, under the rule of law, with freedom of speech and full respect for human rights. The emergence of OPEC in 1973 slowed down, but did not stop, the growth of the Western European economy. Mean-

tricts, by television. Gift parcels sent by relatives had to be allowed in order to alleviate the chronic shortage of consumer goods. Finally, the need of the communist regimes for Western currencies even forced them to open their countries to tourism.

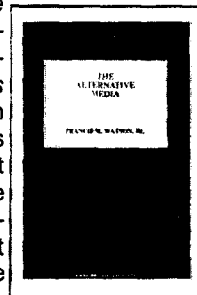
The inhabitants of Eastern Europe have thus been able to observe that, for three decades, the gap between their living standard and that of West European countries has not narrowed but widened. This means that Western Europe, prosperous and democratic, is an attraction, a magnet to the East Europeans, hence a destabilizer of the Soviet empire, for a stable Western Europe constitutes a tangible threat to the Soviet Union.

So our analysts and policy-makers are not so hard-nosed and realistic after all. Their assumption that the Soviets and the Western powers have a mutual interest in stability is an illusion. For the Soviets, stability in East and West are contradictory, not complementary. Because our Soviet analysts and our policy-makers fail to see this, they also fail to recognize that destabilization through terrorism constitutes an integral component of Soviet foreign policy.

The traditional instruments of Soviet foreign policy in the West, the Communist Parties, can no longer be used as

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sion to bring terrorism to Europe was made in 1968. The date is significant. It was a year in which it was easy to find recruits for terrorist gangs on the university campuses, among naive and disoriented middle- and upper-class youth. It was also the year in which the Soviet empire faced one of its recurrent crises: the threatened defection of Czechoslovakia, where even the party leadership had been demoralized by the spectacle of democracy-in-affluence in neighboring West Germany and Austria.

The sole criterion for Soviet sponsorship of terrorists is technical competence. Ideology is irrelevant, because the purpose of Soviet-backed terrorism is not to Sovietize the target countries but simply to destabilize them. The aim

is to plunge these countries into political confusion—leading to chaos, capital flight, economic decline and possibly military dictatorship—so that their prosperity and democracy will no longer tempt the subjects of the Soviet empire. For that, terrorists of any ideological complexion will do.

In order to persuade the Soviet Union to abandon its sponsorship of international terrorism, the Western democracies would have to agree on—and implement—a systematic, coordinated policy of political and economic sanctions. The first step toward such a policy is *to recognize the problem*. Claire Sterling's book, and the commotion it has caused, will surely help our policymakers to do that. □

Tales of Virtue and Excellence

Carol Felsenthal: *The Sweetheart of the Silent Majority: The Biography of Phyllis Schlafly*; Doubleday & Co.; New York.

by Becki Klute

Who is Phyllis Schlafly, this impeccable lady who touts the virtues of traditional womanhood even as she performs quite untraditional feats? This is the question Ms. Felsenthal attempts to answer. The facts have long been known—Sacred Heart Academy, Washington University, husband Fred, six kids—but they don't really tell us much. Ms. Felsenthal has done a creditable job in her efforts to find the "real" Phyllis Schlafly. But Ms. Felsenthal was unable to "climb behind her eyes" and discover the elemental person beneath the personality, the human being who lives inside the well-known woman. For Phyllis Schlafly is a very private person. She has been burned more than once by the media, so her reluctance to reveal

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her inner self is, perhaps, understandable. She resents public speculation on whether she has a housekeeper; she is hurt when ERA supporters concoct tales of child neglect in her house. She has learned that such things are inevitable, but one gets the feeling that she'd be much happier if reporters would concentrate less on her life and more on her ideas. That separation is impossible, though, for Phyllis Schlafly's ideas are ultimately the product of Phyllis Stewart Schlafly's life.

Although her daughter was born not with a silver spoon but to a family with only the memory of it, Odile Stewart set about to instill in Phyllis all the best, the most solid, attributes of the elite. And she had a willing pupil. A fortunate combination of genes gave Phyllis both the desire and the ability to fulfill her mother's every dream—much of which became her own. She teamed her prodigious intellectual talents with a phenomenal sense of self-discipline to succeed at literally everything she tried.

Phyllis Schlafly reminds me a little—in accomplishment, not ideology—of Eleanor Roosevelt, or even of Rose Ken-

nedy. Like them, she is at the same time very powerful and very feminine. Like these political wives of a previous generation, she considers herself first and foremost a wife and mother. Like them, she cares for a large family and looks to her husband as the head of the household. Just as Mrs. Roosevelt influenced the women of a nation and Mrs. Kennedy groomed her young statesmen for the Presidency, Phyllis Schlafly has left her own indelible mark on our time.

Is there, then, a connection, or compatibility, between femininity and power which the vehement ERA proponents have not suspected? Throughout history there have been women who changed the course of nations—from Cleopatra to Joan of Arc to Margaret Thatcher. Women have left their imprint on societies around the world, in every walk of life, from the criminal (Bonnie Parker) to the spiritual (Mother Teresa) and virtually everything in between. Is it possible, then that there have never been any walls around women? Perhaps what faces the ambitious woman is not so much a wall as a prickly hedge—difficult, but certainly not impossible, to penetrate.

So what are the unique qualities that these unusual women—including Phyllis Schlafly—share? Education is a factor, whether it is of the "homespun philosopher" variety or the "school of hard knocks" or formal instruction at an exclusive college. Ingeniousness helps, too: the successful person is adept at circumventing life's roadblocks.

A major key would seem to be self-discipline—a quality Phyllis Schlafly seems to have been born with, or absorbed along with mother's milk and pabulum. Unless her former classmates and teachers, her friends and relations, have wonderfully kind memories, there is scarcely a single instance of Phyllis Stewart losing her temper, sassing a teacher or slapping her sister. Intensely competitive, she seems to have preferred to display her superiority in the academic arena.

One rare and outstanding quality

belongs to Mrs. Schlafly—the ability to “take life’s lemons and make lemonade.” To make the best of things, not in a passive, resigned sense but in an almost aggressive fashion. Where a feminist would sit, Victorian fashion, and bewail life’s cruelty, Phyllis Schlafly turns disadvantage into asset. Of her working/college stint, she comments:

... the most wonderful two years of my life—a unique experience.

I can think of few people who could complete three years (she had been at Maryville College for her freshman year) of college in two, work full time, graduate Phi Beta Kappa and call the whole episode “wonderful.”

One might say that Mrs. Schlafly is decisive. The most common definition of that word is the ability to make decisions. But in Phyllis it takes on a slightly different meaning: she has “decided” that life works out well for her. With an incisive intelligence she can size up a situation and quickly recognize what is inevitable and what can be changed. When she has altered it in whatever way she can, she simply *decides* to be pleased with the result. Rather than yearn for the unattainable, she either attains it or she makes up her mind to be happy with what she has. It’s an enviable ability—and one which is totally at odds with the current fashion of navel-contemplating or psychoanalysis, wherein one searches for culprits on whom to place the blame for one’s problems or deficiencies. It’s an attitude that gets more results than self-pity does.

This factor, I think, is what lies behind her profound contempt for feminists. In Phyllis’s eyes these “ladies” stand around complaining about either trivialities or conditions that could be changed if only they were willing to put forth some effort. In her view feminists would rather shout, march, demonstrate, harangue and call names than work to prove themselves. Phyllis Schlafly’s own life would seem to prove

her point. Which, of course, is why she so infuriates the members of NOW and their cohorts. Besides being intelligent and articulate, her argument is irrefutable: “I did it years ago—why can’t you?”

I find myself liking this exemplary lady, although I am awed by her intelligence and a little intimidated by her accomplishments; her self-discipline makes me feel lazy. I wish, though, that she’d admit to some venial sin—that she sneaks Twinkies when no one is looking, or that she secretly watches TV soap operas. She never would, of course, but somehow I still think she is human. Phyllis Schlafly applies her many talents in so many ways because she *cares*. She is deeply concerned about everything in which she has been involved, from her college career to her children, from national defense to the infamous ERA. For Phyllis, an issue that she believes to be important will always impel her involvement. She will forever feel the need to do whatever she can to improve the lives of those around her—in her neighborhood or in the world.

There is, however, one concern which must be mentioned. Phyllis tends to forget that not all women live the way she does. By dint of her superior background, training and intelligence, Mrs. Schlafly has always been very much in control of her own life. But there are many, many women about whom that cannot be said. Some women—yes, even virtuous ones—are sexually harassed at their places of employment; some husbands *do* abuse or abandon their wives.

To these women, Phyllis Schlafly seems to have nothing to say. She inhabits a world where such things simply do not happen, so she can speak meaningfully only to the women of her own world.

Of course. Friedan, Steinem, et al. have even less to say to the true unfortunates among females. They mouth enthusiastic slogans, but in fact they helped to create the very conditions they claim to deplore. When the strident shouts of feminism went out across the land, when sexual independence was proclaimed for women, it actually liberated more men than women. They felt “liberated” from their responsibilities as husbands and fathers: “If she can do everything, well, then, let her” was the attitude taken by not a few. It “liberated” many, perhaps even most, men from the bonds of what was once called chivalry—which extends far beyond opening doors or relinquishing a seat on a bus. Women leaped down from their pedestals only to find the ground beneath muddy and treacherous. Feminists attempt to convince us that mud is fine, beneficial, fun. Mrs. Schlafly would say that we have only to climb back up the marble steps—but she does not notice that there are some who are too weak to do so.

Phyllis Schlafly is on the right track, of course, but the questions of men and women, marriage and families remain complex. One hopes, finally, that when ERA is buried once and for all, she will turn her prodigious abilities to defining and explicating these cultural complexities. Perhaps then she can speak to and for women other than only her own kind. □

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How to Be Selective with Ideas?

Mary McCarthy: *Ideas and the Novel*; Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; New York.

by Stephen L. Tanner

"He had a mind so fine that no idea could violate it." This reference to Henry James by T. S. Eliot is offered by Mary McCarthy as a countermotto for this transcription of the Northcliffe Lectures she delivered last year at University College, London. Her thesis is that novelists of the 19th century, particularly those on the continent, generously and consciously used ideas in their fiction. They had a philosophy of life and desired to communicate it to the public and did so, either directly or through the mouths of their characters. And the public was interested; it expected and appreciated ideas in novels. "So intrinsic to the novelistic medium were ideas and other forms of commentary," says McCarthy, "that it would have been impossible in former days to speak of 'the novel of ideas.' It would have seemed to be a tautology."

But things are different now, she argues. Nowadays, "Ideas are held not to belong in the novel: in the art of fiction we have progressed beyond such simplicities." The modern novel "is a formal, priestly exercise whose first great celebrant was James." And even if Jamesian novels are not being written, his model "remains the standard, an archetype, against which contemporary impurities and laxities are measured." A novel with ideas in it marks itself as dated. Even with her preference for the 19th-century approach, she admits that in writing novels herself she has had to accede and adapt to "progress" in the genre.

The arguments, which are restatements and extensions of those pub-

lished nearly 20 years ago in the literary essays in *On the Contrary*, are unconvincing. She has a gift for the striking generalization and memorable phrase, but not for profound and sustained thought and analysis. Consider, for example, this statement: "In the U.S.A., a special license has always been granted to the Jewish novel, which is free to juggle ideas in full view of the public; Bellow, Malamud, Philip Roth still avail themselves of the right, which is never conceded to us goys." This sticks in the reader's mind, but it won't bear close scrutiny. Granted that Bellow loves to treat ideas (and his case alone seems to go far in refuting her thesis of a modern fiction that has scrapped ideas); is that fact explained solely by his Jewishness? Do Malamud and Roth really use more ideas than their Gentile counterparts? Who is it, anyway, who grants the special license?

The fundamental problem with her arguments lies in her use of the word *idea*. *Idea* is a slippery term that is applied to things as different as a concept, an impression, a topic, an opinion, a plan of action, an intention, a design, a mental image and so on. She never specifies precisely what she means by it and obviously shifts from one meaning to another. Sometimes she uses *idea* to refer to the central theme of a novel; other times she uses the term to refer to subjects treated or issues discussed by characters.

Most often she has in mind political or social ideas, although she never makes this explicit. For example, she claims that George Eliot's novels do not treat ideas; a possible exception: *Felix Holt, the Radical*. Ideas for George Eliot, she says condescendingly, were "wholesome moral reflections." There are few ideas in Dickens because "the incubus or succuba preying on Dickens's people is usually nothing clearly identifiable as a theory or concise program"; a possible exception: *Hard Times*. Her

notion of ideas functioning importantly in a novel seems most aptly realized in the discussions of socialism in Dostoyevsky's *The Possessed*. Her bias is implicit, but clear enough to the careful reader. And once the bias is recognized, her generalizations about ideas and the novel begin to fall apart of their own weight. For example, she claims Henry James banished ideas from his novels. That is true enough for political ideas, I suppose, particularly when political ideas are simply viewed as current events and issues; but his novels are filled with other kinds of ideas.

Connected with the problems created by an amorphous or idiosyncratic use of the term *idea* are those created by a false distinction between the novel of ideas and the novel of images. The distinction is not meaningful because although a novelist might emphasize either ideas or images, he cannot totally separate the two. They stick to each other and lose force as they come unglued.

Although McCarthy is not precise and accurate in delineating and accounting for the differences between pre-Jamesian and post-Jamesian novels, her general sense of that difference is correct. The question of ideas is part of it, but the more fundamental elements have to do with a shift in world views and the rise of antimimetic literary theories. David Daiches is more illuminating when he discusses in *The Novel and the Modern World* the breakdown of communal standards and values in the late 19th and early 20th centuries: "The modern novelist is born when [a] publicly shared principle of selection and significance is no longer felt to exist, can no longer be depended upon." Daiches implies that if a culture can no longer provide a sense of what is significant and valuable in life (and therefore in fiction, which according to the traditional view imitates life), the artist is forced to sub-

stitute formal or aesthetic values for cultural values. In other words, the formalistic character of modern fiction, the impulse toward "pure art," which McCarthy finds so repellent, is closely related to a divorce between literary and cultural values.

W. J. Harvey treats the same phenomenon in *Character and the Novel* when he discusses the individual's sense of insecurity when his relation to his world is no longer "given stability by being part of a divinely-ordered cosmos." According to Harvey, the response of early 20th-century novelists was to seek a sense of stability in the work of art itself:

Because the work of art—viewed as a self-sufficient artifact—is a necessary and not a contingent thing. It is a thing wrenched from the chaotic flux of the experienced world; it has its own laws and its own firm structure of relationships; it can, like a system of geometry, be held to be absolutely true within its own conveniently established terms.

Thus the novelist's task is to present an ordered world *in contrast to*, not in imitation of, the world of ordinary experience. The change that McCarthy attributes to an elimination of ideas from fiction actually results from the antimimetic tendencies generated by the breakdown of traditional religious and cultural values.

Henry James is the villain of *Ideas and the Novel*. While it is true that he wrought significant changes in the art of fiction, changes leading away from the 19th-century novels McCarthy admires, she might to some extent be giving him a bum rap. Timothy P. Martin in "Henry James and Percy Lubbock: From Mimesis to Formalism" (*Novel: A Forum on Fiction*, Fall 1980) argues persuasively that many of the ideas and attitudes ascribed to James actually originated with Lubbock. In *The Craft of Fiction*, one of the seminal theoretical works of our century, Lubbock's debt

to James is great and clearly acknowledged. But the ideas of the two have been identified too closely and the differences oversimplified. According to Martin, James, for all his interest in the formal aspects of fiction, was ultimately a mimetic critic whose primary interest was in a novel's relationship to reality and its moral quality. Lubbock was the rigorous formalist. "For James, fiction was a means to an end; for Lubbock, fiction was an end in itself."

McCarthy suggests that James's alleged exclusion of ideas in the sense of mental concepts was a consequence



of his "exclusion of common factuality." She recognizes a strong affinity between ideas and facts. In an essay on "The Fact in Fiction" (1960), she claims that "The passion for fact in a raw state is a peculiarity of the novelist. Most of the great novels contain blocks and lumps of fact—refractory lumps in the porridge of the story." She thinks the novel resembles the newspaper, with odds and ends of information and the news items of the day. "Even when it is most serious, the novel's characteristic is one of gossip and tittle-tattle." These attitudes are reflected in her own fiction. *The Group* bears a cumbrous burden of facts and "tittle-tattle"; indeed, the heavy reliance on the cataloguing of details culled from real life gives the

impression that life has not been sufficiently strained through the refining net of the author's imagination.

The case of *Birds of America* is similar. The cataloguing of subjects that pass through the mind of the liberal undergraduate main character—the Goldwater campaign, Vietnam, communism, the C.I.A., civil-rights marches—seem interminable and not closely related to the novel's alleged main theme, which is made explicit in the last sentence: "Nature is dead."

Her theory of fiction is based on the notion that if she gets the details or facts right they will have coherence and pattern. The pattern is in the experience and should not be imposed from the outside. There is truth in this, but applied in her own novels, the theory's limitations become immediately apparent. In great novels, facts follow ideas—the shaping and selecting imagination actively orders the flux of experience instead of merely describing it.

Ideas and the Novel is eminently readable, and it is interesting to observe McCarthy's quick mind responding to the great French and Russian novels of the 19th century (these are her main focus); but her tendency to view ideas as exclusively social or political and to confuse ideas with topical facts and information is disappointing. In a book with such a title, one would like the ideas considered to be fundamental ones concerning the nature of man and his relationship to his world, his fellow men, and his God. As Henry James, McCarthy's *bête noire*, said in an 1874 essay on Turgenev:

The great question as to a poet or a novelist is, How does he feel about life? What, in the last analysis, is his philosophy? When vigorous writers have reached maturity we are at liberty to look in their works for some expression of a total view of the world they have been so actively observing. This is the most interesting thing their works offer us. Details are interesting in proportion as they contribute to make it clear. □

What Faulkner's Life Was All About

David Minter: *William Faulkner: His Life and Work*; The Johns Hopkins University Press; Baltimore.

by Earl Hilton

One's first reaction to yet another book about Faulkner is likely to be "Why?" But as one reads Minter's book several points become evident. He writes with clarity and even grace. He largely avoids those convoluted sentences into which literary critics seem to fall in their attempt to record complexities of thought and feeling, and then too often cultivate as a mark of their calling. He has read all of Faulkner's writing now available, including drafts, unpublished manuscripts and letters—and he has read thoughtfully. He probably has not read all the works about Faulkner, for that would have left him no time for reading Faulkner. But he has read the major biographers and critics. He cites thirteen memoirs by members of Faulkner's family and acquaintances. He knows well the body of American and world literature upon which Faulkner drew and against which his work must be seen if we are fully to understand it. He notes, as others have, similarities between the life and works of Hawthorne and those of Faulkner. Where others have stressed the break between Faulkner and Sherwood Anderson, Minter rightly stresses Faulkner's continuing sense of indebtedness to Anderson and his admiration for Anderson's best work. He is the first author I have read who explicates elements in Faulkner's thought and feeling by quoting lines from Robert Frost. He honors his readers by not identifying all quotations and allusions.

Minter does not claim major new discoveries in Faulkner's biography or

major new readings of his novels. His work is more a sifting and a synthesis. It tells, he says, "of deep reciprocities, of relation and revisions between Faulkner's flawed life and his great art."

In these days when everyone who encounters a famous or notorious person publishes a memoir or a novel, the flaws and sorrows cannot be concealed. Faulkner married his childhood sweetheart, Estelle Oldham, but only after she had married and divorced another, and apparently after he had ceased to love her. The marriage was unhappy for both. Both were expert spenders but poor savers, constantly in debt. He bought Rowan Oak and expended effort and money on its restoration, determined to create there a life "ante-bellum and stately." Trying to support Rowan Oak and expensive tastes, he endured exile in Hollywood and wrote stories he considered potboilers. An affair with Meta Doherty lasted through several stints in Hollywood. In his later years there was another abortive affair with a younger woman. He repeatedly told tall stories as fact, causing embarrassment to friends and unwary biographers. From early in youth he drank too much. He often neglected to eat while on drinking sprees, once remarking that there is a lot of nourishment in an acre of corn. His last years, with intermis-

sions when his writing went well, were spent in depression, depression so deep that once, like Hemingway, he accepted shock therapy. Death was hastened by alcohol and a series of injuries caused by reckless riding. All this is told with, in Minter's term, "tenderness" for its subject. We are left with admiration for the work and sympathy for a man apparently poorly equipped to deal with what Walker Percy calls "everydayness."

But such details do not tell that part of Faulkner's life that most concerns us. A reviewer said of a recent biography of Edith Wharton that now we know everything about her except why and how she wrote. Minter avoids that error. Faulkner once said that writing gave him something to get up for in the morning. In another mood he saw it as the artist's defiance of death. Minter quotes Shelby Foote on Faulkner: "Writing, to him, was what living was all about." When he withdrew into his austere study, symbolically taking the doorknob with him, Faulkner lived intensely, regardless of exterior circumstances. When he was writing, he controlled his drinking.

Here, certainly, was one reciprocity between writing and life. The reverse, life contributing to writing, is in some cases obvious, in others more questionable, although Minter always offers support for his inferences. Everyone knows how he transmuted stories told in his family or around the courthouse square (and, Minter adds, a library well stocked with histories of the South) into his imaginary kingdom of Yoknapatawpha. He did not, as he claimed, fly with the RAF and receive injuries requiring frequent medication with whiskey. But his three months of ground training did give him a lifelong interest in aviation and furnished material for two novels. The poetry to which he devoted his youth was derivative and inferior, but it contributed to the unabashed rhetoric of his fiction. Minter makes a promising



Dr. Hilton has recently retired from teaching English at Northern Michigan University.

suggestion to explain the apparent sudden breakthrough in his Yoknapatawpha novels. His concept of poetry, stressing finish and perfection, was restrictive. But oral stories were never finished or definitive. Each teller was expected to make his own changes and additions, and they offered Faulkner the same freedom. Perhaps, too, hearing and telling such stories had as much to do with his emphasis upon the teller and listener—in addition to the tale—as with such experimental novelists as Conrad and Joyce. His anxieties and tensions added to his achievement—the desire to withdraw from life and the desire to participate, the desire to conceal and the desire to tell all (preferably in a single sentence). The first conflict he resolved, Minter says, by turning toward “explorations of region, family, and self that would make his writing a mode of action rather than substitution, a form of adventure rather than evasion.” The second led toward telling stories by indirection. By indirection he could say things he dared not say directly and discover things he did not know he knew. He could also speak with greater power. His method, he said, was to present “the shadow of the branch, and let the mind create the tree.”

Minter does justice to Faulkner's persistent themes, such as the universal discovered in the local, the interconnectedness of lives, and the past as a force living in the present. In the family, the center of interconnectedness, he shows how repeatedly it is children who hold Faulkner's sympathy, and how often they suffer from unloving or inadequate parents. Here too Minter suggests a projection from Faulkner's own experience. We cannot now recover Faulkner's childhood, but Minter does show that the parents' marriage was about as unhappy as Faulkner's own. Drawing upon a study by John Irwin, he observes the sustained concern with incest, but says little about possible sources or significance. He agrees with earlier critics who profess to find in Faulkner a distrust, or even dislike, for

women. It is true that Faulkner did create admirable women characters, but all such admirable women are either black or members of what Southerners like to call “the yeoman class.” When, in “Carcassonne,” he asserted that creative imagination is a male monopoly, he seemed to be borrowing from Sherwood Anderson, who had borrowed from Nietzsche. “Carcassonne” seems to date from about 1925. One wonders what Faulkner's response was when, in the 30's, the work of his fellow-Mississippian, Eudora Welty, began to appear. The dominant tone of Faulkner's work Minter appropriately calls elegiac. All institutions and all men pass, to be replaced by new forms and new strivings. The writer pays his tribute to past or passing times and men, to their creativity, their courage, their endurance and their customary confusion.

Minter shows critical judgment (or at least agrees with me) in placing *Absalom, Absalom!* at the top of Faulkner's works. Following its publication he traces a steady decline. Possibly weariness was a major cause (consider what he had produced between 1928 and 1936), but Minter also credits increasing preoccupation with racial injustice and war. What Henry James called “views” (thanking God he hadn't any) had been subordinate to character and action, and indeed grew out of them. Now didacticism increased and characters were shaped, or misshaped, to carry messages. Of the result in *A Fable* Minter says, “It was almost as though his creative self were being forced to serve a foreign dictator.” Part of his unhappiness in his last years was caused by the honesty and accuracy with which

he recognized that his newer work was inferior. But he found some consolation in what he had achieved. Minter believes that he died knowing that, as he had said of Camus, he had done what he had it in him to do.

Minter compresses a great deal of information, inference and judgment into a relatively short book (251 pages plus notes, bibliography and a thorough index), but it is the mark of a good study that it leaves the reader with a desire to know the answers to a few more questions, and perhaps to add a bit to fill in the outline. For example, Faulkner's anti-industrial stance (“Standard Oil” as a kind of swear word) was traditional in the South. But has anyone traced the influence on his opinions and attitudes of such determinedly leftist New York and Hollywood friends as Dorothy Parker, Dashiell Hammett, and Lillian Hellman? Again, Minter reports European response to Faulkner. “In France, Faulkner is God,” said Sartre. He tells us that black activists rejected Faulkner's racial strategy, but he tells us nothing of the response of young black writers. Albert Murray, in *South to a Very Old Place*, shows us such a group at Tuskogee (Ralph Ellison was on its fringes) who took Faulkner's work as inspiration and guide. It seemed to them that he had presented the feeling of life in the South much more accurately than any predecessor. Not being black, he had not quite caught the black experience, but he had come surprisingly close. If, as cousin McCaslin suggests in “The Bear,” the soul hovers in its native area after the body dies, and Faulkner's ghost now haunts Oxford or whatever big woods remain in Mississippi, he would be glad to know that. □

In the Mail

First Glance at Adrienne von Speyr by Hans Urs von Balthasar; Ignatius Press; San Francisco. An examination of the life and works of Adrienne von Speyr.

Bitter Grass: The Cruel Truth About Marijuana by Roy Hanu Hart, M.D.; Psychoneurologia Press; Shawnee Mission, Kansas. An analysis by a clinical psychiatrist of the physical and emotional effects of marijuana.

Pedlar Without Customers

Madelon Bedell: *The Alcotts, Biography of a Family*; Clarkson N. Potter; New York.

by Robert C. Steensma

Emerson called him "the most extraordinary man and highest genius of the time" and "a God-made priest," while Thoreau saw him as "a King of Men . . . one of the last of the philosophers." But Bronson Alcott perhaps described himself best as a "Pedlar . . . set bodily, mystically, down in the best market in the world . . . without a customer for his wares," although at another time his visionary enthusiasm could make him hallucinate that "I am God. I am greater than God. Greater is the container than the contained. Therefore I am greater than God."

Madelon Bedell's book traces the public and private career of Alcott from his birth in 1799 to his death in 1888. It is a story of frustrated idealism, financial recklessness and intellectual endeavor within the context of New England transcendentalism and the exciting days of the young American republic. The subtitle, "Biography of a Family," is somewhat misleading in that the spotlight of the narrative is focused upon Alcott while his wife and four daughters serve mainly as supporting actresses.

Alcott began his career as an unorthodox schoolmaster who challenged the rigid educational theories which had dominated American education for decades. At his first school in Connecticut, as well as at the more famous ones in Pennsylvania and Boston (the latter the well-known Temple School), he taught by innovative and unconventional methods derived from a theory of child psychology which viewed the young mind as impressionable, flexible

and capable of incredible feats of learning if taught with sympathy, understanding and care.

But his methods were no more welcome in his own time than they would be in colleges of education and public school systems today. His attempt to integrate his school by the enrollment of a black girl, his use of the Socratic method, and an economic depression prevented him from achieving the success he so desperately sought, thus driving him into, as he put it with a phrase borrowed from Shakespeare, "Family straits. This is the winter of my discontent."

His enthusiasm never flagged, however. With consistent verve he threw himself into writing and lecturing, visiting with his intellectual and artistic friends, working on the transcendentalist *Dial* magazine, and pursuing his endless stream of projects.

Alcott tried his hand at establishing a utopian community at Fruitlands, about fourteen miles from Concord. This little paradise flourished for a few months and fulfilled Emerson's expectations: "The sun and the evening do not look calmer than Alcott and his family at Fruitlands. They seem to have arrived at the fact, to have got rid of snow, & so to be serene. . . . I will not prejudge them successful. They look well in July. We will see them in September."

Emerson was right. Fruitlands failed, but Alcott continued his crusades for vegetarianism, women's rights, educational reform and the abolition of slavery. After long years of poverty and humiliation through which he dragged his long-suffering family, he finally achieved a very modest financial security, partly by several lecture tours in the West, but mostly by the great success of his daughter Louisa May's *Little Women* (1868). "Paid up all the debts," she wrote wearily; "Thank the Lord! . . . Now I could die in peace."

Bedell's book, the first biography of Alcott since Odell Shepard's *Pedlar's Progress* (1937) and only the second since Sanborn and Harris's *A. Bronson Alcott* (1893), is one of those finely tuned biographies (always rare) that combine a pleasant wit, a graceful style, a respect for facts and a suspicion of exotic interpretation. Bedell carefully sets Alcott within the context of transcendentalism and wisely avoids the kind of psychiatric claptrap so tempting to biographers of visionaries and eccentrics. Although Alcott was one of the lesser lights of the transcendental movement and the Concord circle, his career, as traced by Bedell, sheds a great deal of light on such figures as Emerson and Thoreau and gives a splendid insight into what F. O. Matthiessen called the American Renaissance.

Alcott's death in 1888 perhaps marked the end of an age and of a literary generation, that of the romantics who had appeared on the scene with Irving, Cooper, Bryant, Poe and Emerson in the 1820's and 1830's. These were the years when American writers broke away from British and continental traditions to fashion a literature expressive of the aspirations of the new nation.

The history of American transcendentalism has usually been written from the perspective of its two giants, Emerson and Thoreau. But a deeper and broader view of this major force in the history of American culture must involve an appreciation of lesser figures such as William Ellery Channing, Theodore Parker, Orestes Brownson, Margaret Fuller and Alcott if its full impact is to be felt. Transcendentalism was more than "the complicated state of mind . . . idle chatter of a transcendental kind," as Gilbert and Sullivan ridiculed it, or "moonshine," as Carlyle described it.

With its roots in New England Puritanism, European philosophy and Oriental mysticism, transcendentalism was, as Van Wyck Brooks put it, a flowering of New England, a view of life which rejected both rationalism and traditional Christianity in favor of an intuitive perception of God and nature which was to vitalize American art and literature in the middle third of the 19th century and reaffirm the democratic ideal of the moral significance of the individual. It was, in a way, a second declaration of independence; just as the prose of Jefferson and the Continental Congress affirmed the political independence of the colonies in 1776, so the emerging romanticism of Irving, Cooper, Poe, Hawthorne, Melville and Whitman, as well as the transcendentalism of Emerson and Thoreau—all before the Civil War—showed that the young nation had come of age culturally.

These writers brought a sense of mystery and strangeness to American literature and nurtured the humanitarian impulse which blossomed into political and social reform. By underlining the importance of freedom and individualism, by strengthening faith in the worth of the American experience, these men demonstrated the maturation of America from colony to nation. Transcendentalism, opposed as it was to rationalism and authoritarianism, gave to the American spirit an intuitional idealism which underlay many of the causes to which the intellectuals of the period devoted themselves.

Thus in the dark symbolism of Poe, the incisive spiritual probings of Melville and Hawthorne, and the exultant nationalism of Bryant, Cooper and Irving there was born the belief that America was unique in human history, a nation favored by destiny to lead the world. The Manifest Destiny of President Polk and others, while repugnant to writers such as Alcott and Thoreau on the particular issue of the Mexican War, reflected the dominant idea of the time—that Americans were a chosen people, living

under the best of human institutions, who would serve as a model for the ideal society. Whitman perhaps best expressed this sense of adventure in "Passage to India":

Sail forth—steer for the deep
waters only,
Reckless O Soul, exploring, I with
thee, and thou with me,
For we are bound where mariner
has not yet dared to go,
And we will risk the ship,
ourselves, and all.

But even as Whitman wrote, the romantic impulse was beginning to weaken. The agony of the Civil War, burgeoning political corruption and the rise of an industrial-urban society was giving substance to Mark Twain's im-

age of the Gilded Age, and it would not be long before the reforming spirit would fade before the rise of naturalism in the work of Stephen Crane, Frank Norris and Jack London. Perhaps Emerson's "Terminus" (1867) foreshadowed the eclipse of his generation's hopes: "It is time to be old,/To take in sail."

The dreams of a people rarely die. Occasionally bruised by war, political scandal and moral decay, the vision of Alcott's generation lives on, to the great annoyance of the radical demagogues. The endurance of the romantic and transcendentalist ideal testifies to the worth of the aspirations of that peculiar band of visionaries. Like Alcott, each of them may at times have felt like a pedlar without customers, but their best market may be yet to appear. □

Ideological Femacho

Letty Cottin Pogrebin: *Growing Up Free: Raising Your Child in the 80's*; McGraw-Hill; New York.

by Carson Daly

Ostensibly a guide to help parents and educators "raise a free child in a sexist society," Letty Cottin Pogrebin's *Growing Up Free: Raising Your Child in the 80's* is a multigeneric compendium advocating feminist ideology. Appearing as a biosociopsychosexual treatise, this more than 500-page tome combines aspects of the self-help manual, the how-to book and the pep talk. Added to this mélange there are also pointers on feminist consumer activism and allusions to Pogrebin's own "Road to Damascus" experience, her conversion "to feminism at the beginning of the seventies in a series of blinding, never-turn-back flashes of perception." As if this were not enough, *Growing Up Free* also features elements

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of an intergalactic detective story which attempts to solve the mystery of sexism—a kind of "cosmic immorality" according to Ms. Pogrebin.

A veteran of two previous books advising women how to get along in a man's world, Ms. Pogrebin's recent work attacks sex-role stereotyping from womb to grave, explains its detrimental effects on life at large and offers advice on how to root out sexism in all of its virulent forms—from nursery decorations to children's toys, from cultural events to co-ed athletic programs. Although her analyses and her solutions are simplistic and superficial, she should nonetheless be given credit for a wry sense of humor, a quick mind, a facility with language and a genuine concern for the injustices of sex stereotyping. She more or less convincingly shows the utter fatuity of limiting girls' career choices to those of mother or menial and those of boys to chairman of the board or hulk. The author also more or less successfully demonstrates that women and men are both victimized by the code of *machismo*, by society's unreasonable expectations

of male prowess and female incompetence, and by unwritten rules that encourage men to be seemingly callous, aggressive tycoons and women to be apparently silly, seductive sirens.

Growing Up Free is both thorough and exhaustive, and sometimes thoroughly exhausting. The exhaustion results not only from the size of the book, its unabating feminist fervor and the blind absolutism of the author's pronouncements, but also from its multitudinous contradictions. If these were typical only of Ms. Pogrebin's book, they would reflect merely her personal idiosyncracies, but unfortunately they seem to be inherent aspects of the militant feminism that Ms. Pogrebin (a founding editor of *Ms.* magazine) and others espouse.

Like other militant feminist studies, *Growing Up Free* is intellectually dishonest in claiming to be unbiased, non-sexist and objective. The author does not seem to realize that her stance is definitely biased and at least partially sexist itself. This lack of objectivity appears in the guise of unsubstantiated opinions ("Total Motherhood cannot be good for children if it puts in charge of them someone whose distinguishing characteristics are passivity, other-directedness and self-sacrifice."); doctrinaire statements ("Someone female is feminine and someone male is masculine and all else is propaganda"); simplistic ideas ("the flip side of chivalry is rape"); mouthing of jargon ("Our children cannot wait for the revolution"); unqualified assertions ("there are only one million licensed day-care slots for the twenty-eight million children who need them"); and arbitrary ultimatums ("childhood must be changed").

Ms. Pogrebin, like other proponents of feminist ideology, is either unable or unwilling to acknowledge many of the inherent contradictions in the party line. She sees no contradiction between her statement that her "bias is pro-child" and her conviction that abortion is a

"feminist right." Nor is she consistent even in this purportedly nonsexist, pro-murder bias: she does not object equally to the fetal killings of *both* sexes after amniocentesis, but only to the fact that the majority killed is female: this is sexism at its worst. Furthermore, her real concern is not with the larger percentage of aborted female children, but with the fact that this might "compromise abortion as a birth control option." When those who support infanticide as a "birth control option" call themselves "*pro-child*," we can only wonder what would be called *anti-child*.

Another contradiction to which Ms. Pogrebin falls prey centers on a deliberate misapprehension of the difference between the private and public spheres. The feminists demand publicly funded sex education, yet they repudiate the "judgmental" attitude of the taxpayers

who would have to support it. They insist upon the right to have publicly funded child day-care centers, but not upon the taxpayers' right to refuse funding them. They claim that the state should not support a private ideology, yet they demand that it fund theirs. Although Ms. Pogrebin asserts that the state has no business in anyone's private sex life, she endorses state-funded family planning, sex education, abortion and child day-care facilities.

Even more surprising than this insistence on publicly funded sex education is her stipulation that it be taught "non-judgmentally." This view is disingenuously naive, for Ms. Pogrebin and most other feminists are well aware that there is no such thing as a "nonjudgmental" attitude—especially on an issue so highly charged as sex education. They

LIBERAL CULTURE

Wisconsin Gestapo

High Times—a Manhattan monthly and a propaganda organ for youth genocide via drugs—reported a bloodcurdling instance of deprivation of human rights which was perpetrated by the Milwaukee vice squad against a serene, innocent, idyllic punk-rock group called the Plasmatiks. Its star, a certain Ms. Wendy Williams, was apprehended for performing lewd acts in front of a teen-age audience; she described the police action as "gestapo tactics." Here is how *High Times* sees it:

In Milwaukee just two days after Reagan had stolen the presidency with the aid of the sinister New Wealth Morality coalition led by its TV preachers and their fund-raising/brainwashing techniques, the campaign against rock music began in earnest when dozens of police arrested Plasmatiks lead singer Wendy Williams for an 'obscene' act which they later admitted was merely fondling a sledgehammer suggestively.



Certainly, words so laden with political savvy and social conscience are bound to make a doped junkie reach for his .22 and go after the thief who stole the Presidency, but this is the Secret Service's problem. As for Ms. Williams, herself, she is a veteran of the next-to-the-oldest profession: she performs or simulates sexual acts on stage. However, our epoch of sordidness has allowed her to forget the sagacious stoicism of the streetwalkers of yesteryear. Her reaction to the inhumanity of the Wisconsin lawmen:

Intellectually I was outraged ...

must also realize that the refusal to inculcate values along with sexual information implies a judgment: that students can make of this information what they will. Such a procedure is not only pedagogically unsound but also unwise and immoral. In no other subject is a student given the facts or the materials for an experiment without any "judgmental" instructions as to how they should be used. Giving children nonjudgmental sex education is far more dangerous and potentially destructive than giving them the toy guns that Ms. Pogrebin abhors.

Another inconsistency that plagues *Growing Up Free* is Ms. Pogrebin's lack of logic in her feminist attitude toward sex education itself. She and other feminists agree that the educational system inculcates a sexist point of view and is often inept in other areas of instruction as well. Despite these alleged shortcomings, however, they support "more sex ed and better sex ed." One wonders why they would want to entrust this delicate subject to those whom they have already accused of gross, if not criminal, incompetence. Why let these same people—who have supposedly allowed Johnny to be a poor reader and Mary to flunk math—loose on sex education? One shudders to think of the fate that awaits the "failures" in this class.

Even uglier contradictions lurk in Ms. Pogrebin's feminist perspective of sexuality. Like most militant feminists, she finds masturbation and casual nudity salutary; she speaks pityingly of "sexual deprivation" after puberty and bemoans the fact that schools have not helped young people to "learn heterosexual intimacy"; she asserts that children should be told that orgasms are "good for the human body" and that "everyone is entitled to have them," and instructs parents to tell children that "male-female sex is primarily for fun . . . you can add your own morality to that, but don't misrepresent the physical truth." Since, for Ms. Pogrebin, sexism (not immorality) is the villain, she condemns "homophobia" rather

than homosexuality, which, she asserts, is an option that is neither "uncommon, abnormal, nor harmful to its practitioners or anyone else" and hurts neither the economy nor ecology. If the economy and environmental considerations become the arbiters of ethics, we shall have reached the final *reductio ad absurdum*.

One of the most striking contradictions in *Growing Up Free* is that the author vents her greatest spleen on virginity, the most nonsexist, sexually self-reliant state. Like other feminists, she does not consider the fact that celibacy can encourage spiritual advancement, intellectual achievement, career accomplishment and personal fulfillment. She considers virginity as merely a "bargaining chip" in the marriage market instituted by the "patriarchy." Ironically this is itself a sexist point of view because it implies that a woman's decision not to define herself through sexual relationships is impossible and reveals that feminists identify women as much by their sexual status vis à vis men as does the patriarchy. Thus the feminist refusal to recognize a woman's ability and right to define herself sexually by abstinence instead of by self-indulgence and promiscuity is anything but nonsexist because both self-indulgence and promiscuity often lead to victimization by a male partner. Furthermore, although feminists are correct to



deplore the double standard, they make a crucial mistake in insisting that there be *no* standard for either sex. Rather than encouraging both sexes to practice chastity, Ms. Pogrebin suggests that both be given the un-privilege of fornication, promiscuity and irresponsible sexuality. This implication that two wrongs make a right violates virtually every traditional moral code known to the Western world.

Therefore, it is not surprising that Ms. Pogrebin and others who support the two-wrongs-make-a-right platform oppose most traditional religions, which they dismiss as "patriarchal." Patriarchy, however, has little to do with the fundamental conflict between traditional religion and feminism. In fact, their goals are essentially opposed. Religion seeks the cultivation of the whole individual through self-abnegation; feminism stresses only the cultivation of the nonsexist aspect of the individual through self-gratification. The great irony is that the "patriarchal" religions which the feminists deride are less sexist than the feminists themselves; the great religious traditions teach that salvation depends upon transcendence of the self and of the male or female sex role, whereas the feminists are fixated on both.

The moral, intellectual and cultural poverty of Ms. Pogrebin's ideology is nowhere more obvious than in this insistence that the cultivation of the whole self be subjugated to that of the part. The central problem with her philosophy is not that its ideas for reform are too inclusive and too radical but that they are not inclusive and radical enough. Her position is specious because she demands justice for both sexes but no mercy for the sexists; tolerance for homosexuals but no compassion for homophobics; fairness in applying the same sexual standard to males and females but no adherence to the highest standard for both. It might be well for feminists to remember that the absence of a vice does not constitute a virtue and that it is truth, not nonsexism, that will set us free. □

COMMENDABLES

The Provincial Press

The publishing industry lives in New York City—that has always been absolute gospel. You want to publish, you want to write, you want to edit—go East, young man, young woman, go East. The venerable establishment houses preen in their own "in-ness," their seemingly indomitable power, scorning as beneath contempt any upstart so misguided as to attempt to publish anything outside Gotham. Civilization begins and ends between the Hotel Algonquin and Elaine's.

Yet, in the hinterlands, some publishing houses that Manhattan dismisses as "provincial" have been releasing some top-quality products. A case in point is the University of Oklahoma Press. Enconced in a part of the country usually perceived as having little besides sagebrush and oil derricks, this house has, in recent years, published a surprising array of titles. Each of the volumes in this brief sampling is highly respectable—well referenced, with copious bibliographies and indices.

The American Political Novel, by Gordon Milne, is a pocket-sized paperback first printed in 1966 and an objective examination of the interrelation between politics and fiction, from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to *Chosen Country* to *Advise and Consent*.

Arizona, A Short History, by Odie B. Faulk, is also a paperback. Dr. Faulk provides an unexpectedly sophisticated account of Arizona's past—from the Spanish colonial era through the 20th century.

John Selman. Gunfighter. by

Leon Claire Metz, is a mercilessly researched examination of a character who was a part of the history of the West. Bill O'Neal's *Encyclopedia of Western Gunfighters* is an outstanding reference work. The great-grandson of a gunfighter, O'Neal lists in meticulous detail both the famous and the nearly unknown, the heroes and the outlaws of the old West.

The Movies in the Age of Innocence, by Edward Wagenknecht, earned high praise from Lillian Gish, who certainly ought to know. A. R. Fulton's *Motion Pictures: The Development of an Art* concentrates more on the technological aspects of the then-infant industry. Both volumes are studded with illustrations—Mary Pickford, Lillian Gish, Charlie Chaplin, even the legendary director, D. W. Griffith.

Give Me Yesterday: American History in Song, 1890-1920 and *Flashes of Merriment: A Century of Humorous Songs in America 1805-1905*, both by Lester S. Levy, provide an overview of the music of the era and the culture that inspired it. Mr. Levy seems to know more about Tin Pan Alley than does anyone



now on Broadway.

The "provincial press" would seem to be eclectic rather than parochial, judging from this selection. So what should we think

about the prevailing attitude of the establishment houses? Perhaps there is no longer such a thing as a "provincial press" in America of the 1980's. □

Kid Stuff

Siegfried Linke: *Know About Weather*; Academy Chicago Ltd.; Chicago, Illinois.

For anyone who has ever been asked, "What makes it rain?" (or snow or fog or dew), Herr Linke has provided an answer. In a beautifully illustrated hard-cover volume he explains the basic phenomena and terminology of weather in language a 10-year-old can easily understand. Richard Sadler has likewise performed an invaluable service by translating it into English. Herr Linke's simple clarity, which avoids "talking down" to his readers, makes this slender volume a delight for anyone.

* * *

Don L. Wulffson: *Extraordinary Stories Behind the Invention of Ordinary Things*; Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books; New York.

Children, and anyone else who is a collector of minutiae, will thoroughly enjoy Mr. Wulffson's account of the development of such objects as shoes, books, paper, frozen foods and other everyday items. What's missing, though, is any indication of any long, persistent effort prior to public acceptance of these various inventions. I had hoped to see examples for children to emulate, men or women to hold before the kid who is about to give up on a difficult science project, math problem, term paper. *Ordinary Things* is nicely illustrated, and Mr. Wulffson's touch is light if not scintillating; if only he had decided to include more than "just the facts."

* * *

George Barr McCutcheon: *Brewster's Millions*; Continuum; New York.

Jerome K. Jerome: *Three Men in a Boat*; Continuum; New York.

If the titles sound a little familiar, they should—they were originally published around the beginning of the 1900's. Continuum has recently decided to issue new editions, both of them edited by David A. Jasen, and release them in a series called Classics of Humor.

Brewster's Millions is especially timely. It chronicles the difficulties of one Montgomery Brewster who must spend, or otherwise relieve himself of, one million dollars in a single year. In order to inherit seven million dollars from a long-forgotten eccentric uncle, he must be absolutely penniless and without tangible assets on his 26th birthday. His task is made even more difficult because he is constrained from revealing his mission to anyone other than the attorneys involved. In an era of post-Keynesian economics, OPEC gas prices and 20 percent interest rates, Monty Brewster's frantic efforts become almost incomprehensible, thus impairing the very literary substance of the book. Read as a postmedieval legend, it can enhance some salubrious feelings of glee for readers in their early teens.

Three Men in a Boat is another pleasure, but it lacks the sparkle of *Brewster's Millions*. Or perhaps I am so entranced by P. G.

NEXT in *The Rockford Papers*

The West and the Rest

by Alan J. Levine

It is widely believed that in some way the Western world *caused* the poverty of the backward countries of Asia and Africa, that the West's prosperity was built at their expense. The colonial empires of the Western European countries, it is alleged, were vast instruments of economic exploitation which extracted enormous wealth from Africa and Asia and conferred few if any benefits in return. This view has become house dogma at the United Nations, which has officially endorsed the claim that the end of colonial rule was necessary for economic development to begin. As the empires fade into the past they seem to evoke more and more hostility. Empire has become a dirty word.

The disintegration of morale that has occurred in the Western democracies over the last generation has made such notions a potent factor in the world situation as well as in the formation of Western policies. An examination of these ideas and the reality they purport to describe is therefore vital. It is worth noting that, although they claim to summarize the history of several centuries of the West's relations with Africa and Asia, they were formulated only gradually during this century. The Victorians thought quite differently, and it may be that their ideas were closer to the truth than those popular today.

At the turn of the century, most of the Western world approved of imperialism. Even the United States had acquired a small empire, despite fierce opposition by many who considered imperialism contrary to democracy and to our national traditions. The future of the world, it was widely thought, lay in the growth and development of the European and Japanese empires. Most people saw European rule as a good thing, a force to promote progress and benefit humanity. Even socialists were not very hostile to imperialism; like Marx, they regarded it as a progressive development. Those untouched by the influence of humanitarianism were still more complacent, for the belief in the in-

herent superiority of the white race was only just beginning to fade. There was very little criticism even in the colonial countries; Indian nationalists, the strongest nationalist group in any colony, felt that British rule was a good thing and that independence lay far in the future.



Western rule was the entering wedge for modern ideas and institutions, science and technology, education, business methods and political ideas (if not practices) to be transmitted into non-Western areas. In Africa, basic literacy reached vast areas for the first time. Western rule usually introduced the prerequisites and sometimes provided the actual beginning (as in India and southern Rhodesia) of industrialization. Transportation systems, some technical training and modern economic organization were introduced everywhere the Europeans went. Except for Japan — which already resembled the West in many ways — the countries of Africa and Asia which remained independent lagged behind former colonies economically and politically. The bloodiest, most tyrannical and hysterically nationalist re-

gimes in underdeveloped countries have arisen in countries never under colonial rule: China, Ethiopia and Iran all provide cases in point. The cruelties committed by Western empires were, in fact, neither new nor extensive. The progress they generated was.

The days of empires — Western empires, at any rate — may be done, but so is the idea of total and sacred national independence. This has been recognized for more than a generation in Europe. It will have to be recognized for Asia and Africa as well.

The above excerpt is from the November issue of *The Rockford Papers*.

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Wodehouse that all other British humor falls slightly flat. In any event, it is a tale of three English gentlemen who decide to rent a boat and row up the Thames for a short vacation. Their misadventures are amusing, and their various fantasies about themselves and their respective abilities certainly need little psycho-

analytical interpretation — which, naturally, may help to bring up a more balanced generation.

McCutcheon and Jerome wrote to civilized people about civilized people, and their work was supposed to reinforce the civility of their readers. It's their undoing in our time, of course. □

Dope, Inc.

Patrick Anderson: *High In America*; Viking Press; New York.

This mind-boggling report on NORML (The National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws) is must reading for anyone wishing to understand the forces of societal disintegration in America. Author Patrick Anderson, a novelist and one-time speech writer for Jimmy Carter, has provided a straightforward and generally sympathetic account of NORML's first ten years and the free-wheeling, utterly amoral promotional genius who founded the organization and built it into a powerful political lobby.

For the reader who has not been initiated into the jungle of high-level power politics, it is a shock to read this documentation of the sleazy half-truths, deception, cover-up, manipula-

tion and blackmail brought to bear in pursuit of legislative goals. Even more startling is the spectacle of White House staff members, business executives, the head of a subsidiary of the Ford Foundation, a former United States Attorney General, many journalists, several Harvard professors and other presumably respectable folk openly joined in a common project with a whole menagerie of drug dealers, drug smugglers, Yippies, revolutionaries and sundry other categories of society's refuse.

Undoubtedly Anderson hasn't a glimmer of his book's potential to further erode the hegemony of the liberal culture for, being a drug user himself, he seems blind to the revulsion which his revelation provokes. [For a more complete commentary on this book and its significance, see the June 1981 issue of *Persuasion At Work*, published by The Rockford Institute.] (JAH) □

In the Mail

Unconditional Surrender: God's Program for Victory by Gary North; Geneva Press; Tyler, Texas. An introduction into the basics of Christianity which covers issues like the nature of God, man and law and the conflict between Christian institutions and the institutions of secular humanism.

The Hospital That Ate Chicago by George Ross Fisher, M.D.; The Saunders Press; Philadelphia. An in-depth, detailed study of the cost of health care and hospitals, including Medicare, Medicaid and private insurance.

IN FOCUS

Perceptibles

Robert Palmer: *Deep Blues*; Viking Press; New York.

A peculiar book which purports to treat one of the most important phenomena of American folk music found its way to our desk, and it certainly became a source of mild embarrassment. The author, who is credited with working for both the *New York Times* and *Penthouse* (this may be the root of the problem) offers an odd approach to the history and sociocultural assessment of the so-called rural Delta blues—the archetypal vocal form which was destined to exert an enormous influence on America's musical culture. The book's index of names and songs will perhaps best explain our uneasi-

ness: there is no mention of Louis Armstrong, Jelly Roll Morton, Mama Yancey or Ida Cox. "Ma" Rainey and Bessie Smith have one notice each, while Eric Clapton gets four, the Rolling Stones three, and Elvis Presley no less than five respectful citations. Mr. Palmer's idol seems to be Muddy Waters, whom he honors with entire pages of reverential references. For the uninformed, Mr. Muddy Waters is a rather crude and uninspired musician (electric guitar!) and singer, whose style and lyrical preferences have never impressed us, and who—in our judgment—is quite ignorant of the authentic musical and poetic substance of the blues as symbol, genre and art form. □



Social Register

A momentous and glorious breakthrough in popular semantics has occurred in this country's strata of objective affluence. The word "strike"—for more than a century the sole property of desperate victims of economic exploitation—finally has been wrestled from the have-nots and passed over to the well-off, if not amply moneyed, social circles. The dreary image of striking that was described by Emile Zola and Upton Sinclair, who portrayed the unbearable miseries of people who were striking in order to give their starving children a loaf of stale bread, seems to have been successfully erased. The media now carry features on robust baseball players who howled in despair as they defended their six-figure yearly honoraria. And now the jet set is striking—the spiffy, well-fed, gaily picketing air-traffic controllers who have come to the conclusion that the benefits of middle-class life (above-average salary, suburban houses with swimming pools, etc.) are insufficient economic rewards if upper-upper-class status can be extorted from society by a method once reserved for those who were hungry and destitute. □

WASTE OF MONEY

In Pulitzer Prize's Tradition

J. C. Louis and Harvey Z. Yazijian: *The Cola Wars*; Everest House Publishers; New York.

by Gavin D. Arbuckle

Journalists are different from other professional writers in that no one really expects them to know what they are talking about. Newspapers remain infested, year after year, by economic journalists who think high interest rates are inflationary, by business journalists who have difficulty understanding basic accounting principles, and by legal journalists who think that accused criminals can plead "innocent."

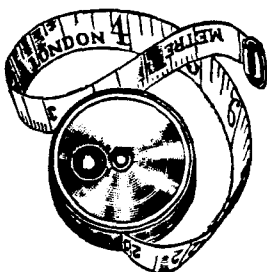
In a time when complete fabrications can be awarded a Pulitzer Prize, it is difficult to condemn a book by two free-lance writers which generally manages to avoid gross and obvious distortions and overpowering bias. As long as Louis and Yazijian content themselves with recounting, in enormous and often tedious detail, the histories of the Coca-Cola Company and Pepsico, Inc., *The Cola Wars* provides few grounds for either argument or excitement.

The authors' fascination with the manipulative power of advertising will hardly be shared by those of us who, as they delicately put it, "play heavily on the freedom of choice angle." Nevertheless, purveyors of Galbraithian buncombe have at least as much claim to be satisfying consumer

demands as do manufacturers of "nonessential brown liquid."

In keeping with the traditions of modern journalism, the authors avoid discussing ideas, merely pausing occasionally to note that détente with the Soviets is a "good thing," and that multinational firms "exploit" Latin American workers, before returning to their descriptions of old advertising campaigns and the personalities of company executives. Unfortunately the same hit-and-run approach is applied to historical facts, which are often drawn from a small number of sources of quite remarkable obscurity. If journalists, to copy Hayek, are second-hand dealers in facts, then Louis and Yazijian are fencing some extremely dubious political research under the cover of their dull and respectable corporate history.

What sort of writer can imply that President Kennedy was murdered by Lyndon Johnson and the Pepsi-Cola Company, and that Richard Nixon was intimately associated with organized crime, seemingly without being aware that these arguments are, well, somewhat controversial? What sort of writer makes unref-



Mr. Arbuckle is an attorney in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

erenced statements that the United States assisted in the murder of Dominican dictator Trujillo and overthrew Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia as if they were established facts, which they most certainly are not? If one approached the question like Louis and Yazijian, who find a conspiracy under every inter-

locking directorship, one would conclude that such writers must be leftist subversives. Actually they are only modern journalists, searching indiscriminately for any shred of scurrilous gossip and rumored impropriety which might enhance the marketability of a dreadfully dull book. □

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Let's Hope for More Indiana Joneses

Raiders of the Lost Ark; Written by Lawrence Kasdan; Directed by Steven Spielberg; Produced by George Lucas; Paramount Pictures.

Mel Brooks' *History of the World*; Written and directed by Mel Brooks; 20th Century-Fox.

by Eric Shapearo

Unwittingly (or perhaps not) *Raiders*, the current ultimate in pulp entertainment and suspense, makes a statement about modern history which would be refreshing and amusing if it were not laden with ironic melancholy. We can go even further and grope for an historical explanation of a convoluted, if not metaphysical, magnitude. What emerges from *Raiders of the Lost Ark* is the supposition that Hitler lost the war because he couldn't acquire the sacrosanct Jewish symbol of God's assistance necessary to win a war—all wars, in fact. It assumes that, regardless of Hitler's fundamental convictions, he feverishly searched for Yahweh's (the Jewish Almighty's) support before he started his worldwide conflagration. But—thanks to the intrepidity, daring and physical exploits of one Indiana Jones, professor of archaeology and quintessential American as exemplified by the American ideals of the 1930's—the ancient Hebrew Ark of the Covenant was rescued from the nazis' clutches and secured for the Allied cause just in time, sometime around 1936. The story details how Indy Jones accomplished such a feat by his astute handling of his fists, legs, muscles, whip and a .38 Colt as well as his archaeological erudition. The Chandleresque reflexes and smart pseudoscience make for superb, lighthearted, inoffensive entertainment—a resurrected, wonderfully American tradition of cliffhangers, serials and "Perils of Pauline," of the innocent culture in which the image of good always wins and social morality



thrives. And Yahweh alone knows how much we need it right now.

Edifying escapism has often proved to be a cultural remedy for the bestial consequences of misguided utopianism. We live in an era of social horrors provided by a militant culture of a redress ideology, a culture which presents a subhuman punk-rock entertainer as an exemplar of naturalistic humanness. If Yahweh can again provide us with some Indiana Joneses as role models for our youth, we may be on the way out of our sociomoral holocaust.

* * *

Nothing can be said about Mr. Brooks's personal view of world history that adjectives like "stupid," "vulgar," "gross," "ignorant," "moronic," "disgusting" and "boring" do not exhaust. Only the addition of the adverb "utterly" could enhance this opinion with more expressiveness. Mr. Brooks seems not to have the slightest idea of what he intends to (or does) talk about, which, of course, is not in itself a reason to refrain from making a movie. His is a scatological genre in which urination

is the universal, all-encompassing key to the knowledge of man and his purpose on this earth. Naturally his "art" elicits cackle rather than laughter. Unawareness may be cheerful, but a concentrated dose of cretinism, a playfulness illustrated by vomiting on a dinner table, does not qualify for any evaluation and frees us from having to devote even one more sentence to Mr. Brooks's picture.

History has never been an easy subject to portray in the movies. With few exceptions, historical pictures have always been infected with theatricality, an insidious ingredient which by nature is antithetical to movie-making as an autonomous art. Even less adaptable to cinematic treatment is philosophy of history, that is, an intellectual method of interpreting history according to some philosophical assumption, synthesizing historical knowledge for the sake of an ideological statement. Griffith's *Intolerance* was perhaps the best-known attempt to establish the genre, and he was not unsuccessful. In the 1930's a French film-maker Sacha Guitry produced a few movies which were imbued with caustic irony about some fragments of French history as seen through a camera. Mr. Brooks, of course, does not qualify to be mentioned with Griffith or Guitry. Yet he succeeds as a catalyst. There's little doubt that the recent breakdown of the American movie culture is due mostly to the amorality of the contemporary liberal movie critic, utterly corrupted by his or her own disintegration of criteria in keeping with the licentiousness of the liberal cultural bazaar. Accordingly, Ms. Pauline Kael, the highly regarded movie critic of *The New Yorker*, generally considered the "dean" of liberal film criticism, closed her exceedingly favorable review of Mr. Brooks's *oeuvre* with a benign absolutism: "He's a cutie." We are left with a pile of manure sanctified by liberal fiat according to a modish gospel. □

Records

by Robert R. Reilly

Bohuslav Martinů's music is undergoing a recording renaissance, thanks mainly to Supraphon, the Czech record company whose discs are generally available in the larger classical outlets in major American cities. Supraphon has recently issued a newly recorded set of Martinů's six symphonies (played by the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra under conductor Václav Neumann). RCA Gold Seal has also reissued a performance of the Symphony No. 6 conducted by Charles Munch, for whom it was written, and Louisville Records has issued a new recording of Martinů's "Concerto for Oboe and Orchestra."

Martinů, who lived from 1890 to 1959, mostly in France and America, composed prolifically and in a style inimitably his own. Record-jacket blurbs speak of the influence of Debussy and others, but his "sound" is unmistakable. He composed over 300 works, an astounding output for an artist in an age stricken by the paralysis of the 12-tone crisis. But Martinů went his own way, immune to the agonies of those who had convinced themselves that tonality had been exhausted. The only composer of whom Martinů is vaguely redolent is his countryman and predecessor, Janáček. Like Janáček, Martinů was not a "movement" composer. He did not seem to develop from any particular stream of music, nor did his music lead to any "school." Martinů's impulse was genuinely musical. This may seem a strange thing to have to say of a composer, but those who have suffered through their share of modern academic "music," inspired by decidedly unmusical theories, will welcome the news.

As one might expect, Martinů did not write over 300 masterpieces. If

Mr. Reilly is a special assistant at the International Communication Agency in Washington, D.C.

Bach may sometimes sound, in Colette's phrase, like a "celestial sewing machine." Martinů occasionally sounds like a terrestrial one. This is not due to a heavy reliance on counterpoint or fugal devices, but to a general sense of mechanical bustle that pervades most of his compositions. His music often proceeds as a succession of skippy knots of rhythm and short, jerky melodies. One can tire easily of his less-inspired pieces; they are motoric, repetitive, rushed. But at its best, Martinů's music is exhilarating, propulsive, mercurial, playfully mysterious. It is music full of surprises and quirky delights. It is tonal, but spiced with ample dissonances that are used *musically*. Martinů's unique orchestrations are brilliant—the piano is used to great effect as an orchestral instrument: winds, brass and percussion often have equal voice with the strings.

All of this is not to say that Martinů is one of the great composers of the



20th century. He is, though, a very good one, and at the very least an interesting musical byway. To anyone who has gotten beyond Brahms (well, perhaps a little further), Martinů's music should be a delightful discovery. Likewise, any intrepid modernist tired of trying to pick the tone rows out of dodecaphonic sound constructions will find welcome relief

in Martinů's musicality.

* * *

My brief mention of Leoš Janáček, Martinů's predecessor and musical superior, brings me to the happy news that the superb performances of Janáček's two string quartets by the Janáček Quartet are once again available, this time through the auspices of the enterprising budget label, Quintessence (PMC-7193). These were available on the Crossroads label years ago. The Quintessence record seems to have been cut at a lower level, requiring a sizable volume boost. This, of course, tends to expose imperfections in the pressing. Nevertheless, they are still the same indispensable performances of two of the greatest quartets ever penned. Janáček said his last quartet was "like a piece of living flesh. I don't think I ever shall be able to write anything deeper and more truthful." Certainly there is little in music that speaks in so direct and passionate a way as these two quartets.

Quintessence has also reissued Karel Ančerl's great performances of Janáček's "Sinfonietta" and "Taras Bulba," which used to be on the Turnabout label. The sound quality may not be the latest, but it is adequate. The last movement of "Sinfonietta" is one of the blazing glories of 20th-century music.

Janáček's music transcends its own necessary limitations and becomes terribly moving as an expression of the fact that the unutterable remains mute: it is music's attempt to say what cannot be said. If music which I would call passionate is beginning to sound metaphysical, recall that Janáček's last work, an opera, was based on a novel, *The House of the Dead*, by Dostoyevsky, that most passionate metaphysician. And if you wish to hear music clamoring at the very gates of heaven, try Janáček's "Slavonic Mass" (Kubelik has

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* * *

Four recent releases of modern American music range from great to middling interest. The finest of the four is a rescue operation by Composers Recordings, Inc. They have reissued an inexplicably absent Columbia recording of Harold Shapiro's "Symphony for Classical Orchestra" (1947). The album cover (CRI-SRD 424) is marked "American Historic" (good heavens, even I was alive in 1947 and it is already historic!), and one can only hope that this is the first in a series of such rescues of neglected American symphonic gems. The Shapiro Symphony represents the best of the American neoclassic movement, i.e. tonal music modeled on the formal clarity and concision of earlier classical (preromantic) musical forms. The piece is lively and enlivening, with a lovely *adagietto*. The performance by the Columbia Symphony Orchestra under Leonard Bernstein dates from 1954 and was recorded in mono, but it continues to serve the music very well. The record cover is graced with a delightful caricature of Bernstein conducting, drawn by Olga Koussevitzky. (The Shapiro piece was commissioned by the Koussevitzky Foundation.) I give this record an unqualified recommendation.

* * *

Another CRI release (CRI SD 410) is billed as "American Contemporary," although one of its featured pieces, "The Seasons," by John Cage, was also composed in 1947. The difference, I suppose,

is that Cage went on to write (or not write, as his emphasis on chance would have it) nonmusic, and Shapiro did not, thus making Cage more our contemporary. The other explanation is that the accompanying piece by Charles Wuorinen, "Two-Part Symphony," is dated 1977-78. In any case, in 1947 Cage, though already immersed in oriental philosophy, was still writing music. He would go on to do his best to destroy the distinction between music and random sounds, as if to liberate us from a terrible tyranny. The wreckage of noise this effort left in its wake is only now beginning to be cleared from the musical center stage. Little of this is adumbrated in Cage's ballet composition in which he intended "to express the traditional Indian view of the seasons as quiescence (winter), creation (spring), preservation (summer) and destruction (fall)." It is not Vivaldi, nor is it Milhaud, who also wrote a modern Four Seasons set. The music is simple, delicate for the most part, lightly textured, yet never boring. It contains some beautiful drawn-out sounds that I would almost swear came from a glass harmonica, though the instrument is not listed on the jacket cover. The recording before a live audience in 1978 is interspersed with a few coughs, but the good sound compensates. Dennis Russell Davies conducts the American Composers Orchestra in a fine performance.

* * *

American Music for Strings (D-79002), offers an easy, enjoyable, but only mildly invigorating listening experience. On the plus side, all the works presented here are tonal and accessible.

The longest work is the liveliest. David Diamond's "Rounds for String Orchestra" (1944). Diamond wrote this piece at the request of Dmitri Mitropoulos who was depressed at having to conduct so much twelve-note music. "Write me a happy work," Mitropoulos asked. "These are distressing times, most of the difficult music I play is distressing. Make me happy." Diamond responded with a nice musical pick-me-up. Samuel Barber's "Serenade for String Orchestra" (1929) was written when the composer was 19. It is pleasant, accomplished, but it does not approach the greatness of his later works. Irving Fine's "Serious Song—a Lament for String Orchestra" (1955) is a symphonic elegy, "an extended aria for string orchestra" as Fine called it, which has genuine weight and beauty. It only lacks that little, indescribable something which would make it a minor classic.

Elliott Carter, not someone from whom we are used to hearing easily accessible music, wrote in 1943 a short "Elegy" which he describes as "basically one long melodic line accomplished by slowly changing chords." Not many composers can pull this sort of thing off, even for a time span as short as five minutes, and maintain interest. Barber succeeded supremely with his famous "Adagio for Strings." This piece does not threaten to displace it, pleasant though it is. Nonesuch's sound is very good, as it should be for the steep list price of \$11.95 for a "budget" digital disc, and Gerard Schwarz conducts the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra with vigor and precision. Two of the works on this record (the Fine and the Barber) are already available on other labels. I hope Nonesuch will consider introducing a whole record of otherwise unavailable tonal American music in future releases.

* * *

Louisville Orchestra Records has brought us a good rendition of George Antheil's Symphony No. 5 (1947) on LS-770. Antheil, as a 26-year-old enfant

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terrible, shocked audiences in 1927 with his "Ballet Mecanique," scored for airplane propeller, siren, electric bells, etc. The notoriety of this early music has unfortunately eclipsed interest in his later, tamer efforts. My only acquaintance with his music came from an Everest recording of his Symphony No. 4 (1942), now apparently deleted. The Symphony No. 5 I enjoy not quite as much, but grow fonder of it with each hearing. The reviewer in *Fanfare* magazine found the style of Antheil's Symphony No. 5 embarrassingly derivative—from Shostakovich, he said; others say Prokofiev. I myself would tag him as an American Malcolm Arnold. Whomever he may remind

you of, he is enough of a musician to keep you thoroughly engaged and occasionally entranced. So if you like your Prokofiev, Shostakovich or Arnold Americanized, try Antheil. The reverse side of this record features the Englishman Peter Maxwell Davies's "St. Thomas Wake: Foxtrot for Orchestra." I have no idea of what Davies is attempting to accomplish with this composition, because I cannot follow it musically, despite his advice to view the foxtrot band music in it as an "object," and the orchestral music as an attitude toward this object. I would have preferred one of Antheil's other symphonies, and I hope the Louisville Orchestra will consider recording them. □

CORRESPONDENCE

Letter from Washington: Faith and the Future

by James Hamilton

Although the opulence of Senate meeting rooms contrasts sharply with the poverty that surrounds her in Calcutta, Mother Teresa does not seem out of place mixing with those who exercise temporal power. She visited Washington June 3 and 4 and impressed her audiences with the simple strength of her message. Of course official Washington is more open to her message today than it has been in recent years. Open to, but not comfortable with, yet.

Introducing Mother Teresa to a gathering of the American Family Institute, Under Secretary of State for Security Affairs James L. Buckley noted that she is a woman who speaks to concerns other than the ones that dominate our secular age. The terms in which she speaks rest uneasily among the terms that dominate political discourse in a commercial republic. George Gilder, supply-side economist and author of *Wealth and Pover-*

ty, spoke on the same American Family Institute program. The contrast between his concerns for the material well-being of secular man and her concerns for the spiritual health of the human race outline the central tension of contemporary politics.

Mother Teresa and George Gilder share a buoyant optimism about the capacities of free people. Mother Teresa observes the wealth of America and brings a message of thanks. She asserts that she has never begged, and that her mission in Calcutta has no need to ask for money. She thanks those who have been generous in the past, knowing that the sincerity of her gratitude, and the generosity of our real Provider, will enable her to continue her work in this world.

The Sisters of Charity care for 7,000 people every day in Calcutta, and Mother Teresa is in the process of establishing homes in several American cities. Americans are unfamiliar with the material poverty of India, but this woman spies a far more terrifying poverty in the American soul. "No poor family will

ever destroy a child," she teaches, "so let us learn from them." She calls upon her listeners to deepen their faith that God's message of His creation is in every child. She knows, "The child is the image of God, the temple of God . . . And we must answer to God for each abortion." Mother Teresa notes that abortion demonstrates a fear of the future, a fear of providing for succeeding generations, and a fear of educating our descendants. In short, abortion symbolizes a basic fear of our ability to provide for others. She remembers that God nurtures the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, and that He has promised to do as much for human beings as He has done for the least of His creatures.

George Gilder understands the strength of faith that is needed to sustain a free people. Indeed, Gilder believes that the system of capitalism depends critically upon the altruistic impulses of people. He affirms that we cannot create wealth unless we give of ourselves first. We give of ourselves by offering the best of our skills in service to others. If those skills are treasured in this world, others will reward our generosity by giving of their own treasure to accumulate what we have to offer. The creative impulse that is the start of a free economy does not know what others will want; it creates in the hope of inspiring desires in the hearts of others.

Gilder is attempting to save capitalism from the rhetoric of vulgar self-interest that has cluttered its vocabulary, even among its defenders, since Adam Smith first promoted his "system of natural liberty." In a capitalist society, material concerns alone cannot provide the strength necessary to sustain free people.

Contemporary conservatives combine an admiration for the idea of the good life that animates George Gilder and a concern for the ultimate matters that preoccupy Mother Teresa. Mother Teresa realizes that success in her temporal concerns depends critically upon

Mr. Hamilton is a scholar who specializes in American political thought.

some who produce the material needs that she will share with others. Gilder, in his several studies of modern society, has acknowledged that true wealth depends upon more than material riches.

Despite their common threads, Mother Teresa and George Gilder are cut from very different cloth. President Reagan speaks easily and publicly the language of supply-side economics, much of which has been coined by George Gilder. The President has also been an advocate of Mother Teresa's concerns, and his Department of Health and Human Services honored her at a White House luncheon on June 4.

President Reagan campaigned on a theme of national renewal, and has affirmed that his administration has one

agenda, rather than separable social, economic and international concerns. On June 4, President Reagan spoke from the White House on economic matters. When Mother Teresa departed after lunch that day, the gaggle of White House reporters who asked the President the topics of luncheon discussion were told simply, "We listened." If the Reagan administration is to achieve its agenda for national renewal, its leading communicator must reassert its public voice on matters beyond money. The renewal of a free society requires a bold and continuous affirmation of the simple strength of the truth that looks beyond economics and into the souls of people who would be free. There we can find the truth that will sustain our future. □

THE AMERICAN PROSCENIUM

Bifurcation

Throughout April and May the debate raged over the candidacy of Ernest Lefever as the State Department's spokesman for human rights. The battle, if not the war, has apparently been won by the assorted forces of the liberal left and the expeditious political operators who are so popular in the Washington, D.C. social-conscience industry. To be sure, Mr. Lefever defended himself without dexterity and perhaps even with a certain maladroitness, which may have precipitated his defeat. Yet the episode has bared some complex aspects of a problem which is not going to fade away with Mr. Lefever's withdrawal and President Reagan's miniblunder.

From the outset the debate that unfolded before the public resembled a catch-as-catch-can tournament. In the 18th century, when human rights constituted the hub of spiritual advancement and the very core of social and political progress, the term came to be defined quite precisely and the notion was clear and functional. Its theorists and political philosophers in France, England and America grounded it firmly

in the idea of natural law and natural rights; they linked it to an elaborate system of social duties, civic obligations and moral responsibilities—which is not exactly what the American left have in mind today when they speak about human rights. What *they* have in mind is an assemblage of privileges which are to be heaped upon their constituents according to *their* ideological prescription. Such notions inevitably end in sociopolitical sloganeering, thus furthering the objectives of liberal and radical policies that are often in obvious disregard of any standard of political honesty and fairness. The noble concept of human rights became hopelessly bifurcated in the left-liberal orientation of President Carter's administration—which amply demonstrated the liberal hypocrisy and selective double standards in the domain of human rights.

Certain principles of human rights as devised by the reigning liberal institutions over the last several decades—the Warren Supreme Court, for example—are viewed by European democracies as childish ravings about the notion of justice. Many Americans have long suspected that the contemporary version

of human rights—especially as it has been warped by liberal manipulation—is not what serves our society best. This feeling might have played a big role in Mr. Reagan's victory: plenty of people expect him to clarify the notion of human rights and put it to respectable use as one of the main ingredients of our national and ideological heritage.

Unfortunately, this has not happened in a satisfactory manner. Mr. Reagan, his conceptualists and his advisers have come no more than halfway in establishing their own doctrine, especially where foreign policy is involved. What they have done is commendable: the declaration that communism, as an ideology and a source of political power, is the primary enemy of and threat to the American concept of human rights is correct and welcome. But to assume that the distinction between a totalitarian regime and an authoritarian one—very accurate in terms of political science—should be based on strategic and tactical priorities strikes us as unfinished, risky and in need of careful elaboration. If America has an historical mission, then we must not try to reduce history to a momentary circumstance; any President who strives to achieve great goals cannot ignore this simple truth. The differentiation of freedoms in various countries cannot be summarized in obtuse catch-phrases if we are to remain the world's pillar of liberty: the degrees of that freedom have to be measured scrupulously, articulated accordingly and dealt with meticulously. Our credibility in proclaiming communism evil will be seriously damaged if we refuse to assert firmly that Argentinian neofascism is a danger to Western civilization (even if it is a scourgelike reaction to the bestiality of leftist terrorists like the Montaneros). We, the American conservatives, cannot afford the unintentional humor of Secretary Haig, who—when asked by a liberal senator what we have in common with Argentina—answered: "God." We doubt that the majority of American Christians would agree that the concept of "God" is the same in every human

heart and mind, and that the "God" of Torquemada or Khomeini fits *our* notion of the Supreme Being and His will to which we are all subject. President Reagan and Secretary Haig may grasp the notion of human rights at this stage of our history—how it should serve our freedom, our welfare and our mission—but we wish that their understanding were rooted in intellectual responsibility rather than in political stipulations. The directive must be not benignly to ignore the human-rights issue but to take it from the liberal monopoly and effectively prove that it is *our* issue.

Incidentally, among those who were most instrumental in Mr. Lefever's demise was Senator Charles Percy. His reasoning seemed rather murky and shady, which confirmed our suspicions: one of the least decent aspects of politics is a lack of clarity in political deeds. Senator Percy is an unusual individual, with a face so honest that one immediately feels uneasy before such excessive uprightness. Whenever he is in trouble he is obsequious to conservatives; when he feels firm in the saddle he panders to liberals in a most oily way. Some perceive such maneuvering as a splendid independence of mind. To us it looks as if Senator Percy has less elusive aims than independence *or* mind.

Nonproliferation

In terms of simple human logic, the Israeli action against the Iraqi nuclear reactor is perfectly consistent and rational. We in America are against the proliferation of nuclear facilities that *could* produce atomic weapons—and Israel has come up with a practical solution to our concerns.

Mr. Louis Nizer, the famous New York lawyer and writer, has offered a more complex—political, legal or moral—analysis of the event. In an article in a recent *Chicago Tribune*, he proved that Israel's decision was fully justified by the principles which have long been

recognized by American, international and even Islamic law—if only someone involved in the ensuing dispute were willing to accept the inconvenience of honestly and thoroughly reading the appropriate canons, statutes and codices.

As for the way the Reagan administration handled the matter, we once again received the uncomfortable impression that the most basic tenets of our foreign policy are far from being securely and thoughtfully fixed. Even the *Wall Street Journal*—which, God knows, wishes Reagan to succeed—found it necessary

to chide our accord with the United Nations' censure; their editorial was entitled "Andy Kirkpatrick"—a characterization of our U.N. representative's meandering which looks like it is right on target. What disturbs us about the Reagan team's erratic approach to foreign policy is its lack of any philosophical sense of the word and the concept of *alliance*. During the 1970's most of our allies got the feeling that we understand neither word nor concept. To prolong this state of affairs would seem to be a very risky business in today's world. □

JOURNALISM

Confusion

In a strange and rather curious article, one Mr. Sidney Zion has accused the American music industry, especially the big record companies, of having deliberately polluted American popular culture with rock 'n' roll music, thereby nearly obliterating the great American heritage of songwriting and popular music that has existed since the turn of the century.

Mr. Zion is obviously a liberal but not a fool—as Senator Jackson once said about himself—and he wages a valiant fight in defense of the excellence, the devastating charm, of early jazz, swing and other treasures of American popular music from Handy to Gershwin to Jerome Kern. The current resurgence of interest in performers like Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald and Tony Bennett he calls a renaissance of taste. He hopes that the declining teen-age record market will usher in more sensible preferences for a musical style more sophisticated than the crudely primitive rock. Yet his treatise suffers from confusion and shallowness. He does not, or cannot, explain why an entire generation abandoned the refinement of Ellington and the poetry of Nat King Cole to worship at the feet of crude protoplasmic machines like Elvis Presley, animated sex

objects like Mick Jagger and singing radic-lib agitators like Bob Dylan. Mr. Zion seems not to understand that popular music is always an expression of ideas (even primitive ones) and trends which are first conceived by centers of culture other than entertainment and show business. The ideas that governed a young, rapidly expanding America whose optimism and socioeconomic robustness rhymed well with healthy patriotism expressed itself through the energy and the painful social concerns of jazz. America—mobilized against the Depression in the 1930's and prepared to defend the world's freedom in the 1940's—found its musical emblem in the dynamism and joyfulness of swing. America of the 1960's—debilitated by sociopsychology, liberal inertia and suicidal defeatism—found its troubadours in the degeneracy of rock.

Mr. Zion researched his article among singers, songwriters, broadcasting executives and music-industry mavenes. The latter tried to convince him that rock's subcultural wave had never been promoted—the country "wanted it" and the record industry responded. It's hard to imagine a more blatant and cynical lie, and Mr. Zion didn't buy it. He quotes a certain Mr. Ahmet Ertegun, president of Atlantic Records, a radic-chic millionaire, the darling of transvestite capitalism à la *Women's Wear Daily* and one

of the most powerful pushers of behavioral nihilism within the Liberal Culture's establishment. Mr. Ertegun told Mr. Zion:

There's nothing we can do to make a record sell . . . the public creates the demand; we simply fill it. That's all there is to it.

So much for all the hoopla we've seen on TV screens and in the release copies regarding the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Janis Joplin. The Who, etc., etc., etc. Then, Mr. Ertegun expresses *his* taste:

I think that the rock-and-roll writers are lyrically head and heels above the Gershwins and Cole Porters for poetic content. I think Mick Jagger and Keith Richard write better lyrics than any of those old writers.

This qualifies Mr. Ertegun as either a cynical murderer of all literary criteria, or an idiot—at least in our eyes.

One thing has to be added: *where* did Mr. Zion publish his welcome, if inept, observation? Surprise! In the *New York Times Sunday Magazine*. As if he were unaware of what the *Times* and its venerable "critics" have con-

tributed to those years of calamity and abomination. Mr. Zion seems *not* to correlate facts which clearly indicate that the respectable media—like the *Times*, CBS or *Time* magazine—never lifted a finger against the onslaught of rock barbarity and illiteracy, against the savaging of every socio-civilizational norm by all the Mick Jagers and punk-rockers, against the utter trashiness of the Alice Coopers and Ramones. That's why such subcultural garbage was able to invade the popular culture in triumph for more than two decades. Now the *Times* seems to have rediscovered taste. □

We, the Hypocrites

In a prominent, smugly dignified editorial, the *Chicago Tribune*—that tower of artful hypocrisy—shows how, in a single masterstroke of cant and duplicity, one can make the good guys look very, very bad, thus preserving for oneself the glory of being infallibly correct. The editorial was a statement supporting (suddenly) Proctor & Gamble's decision not to advertise in TV shows with excessive sexual permissiveness and violence. In it the *Chicago Tribune* preaches:

Far better to cope with the evils of TV this way than to do nothing—which would ultimately be to invite back the book-burners, moral vigilantes, and thought police of worse times and other places.

The book burners, vigilantes and thought police, in the *Tribune's* code, are those who (for the last 30 years) have claimed that liberal ideas would ultimately turn the American culture into a moral and behavioral jungle. It has finally happened. And the *Chicago Tribune* (one of the most effective disseminators of ideological and cultural nihilism for the last decade) now dons the mantle of a defender of reason and morality. It seems that if one can buy a baseball club, he can perform any juggling trick with his identity, his past, his bygone sins and come out pure and righteous. All one needs is to own a newspaper. □

Precision of Thinking & Writing

The title in *The Nation*, a journal of leftish purity in the service of liberal "decency," over a review of two books written by convicted criminals about their prison experiences reads: "Notes from Our Gulag."

The Nation hates Solzhenitsyn for his anticommunism, his anti-Marxism and his contempt for American liberalism. Still, if they intend to use his emblematic word for their own purposes, editors of *The Nation*, an organ of self-anointed decency, should practice one primordial decency and at least read the target of their phobia. If *The Nation's* editors ever did read Solzhenitsyn, they would discover that *Gulag* means a territory where people who are completely innocent (by any Western, democratic, liberal standard) are jailed and tortured by a totalitarian state power in defiance of any existing law. This description hardly fits San Quentin, Leavenworth or any other federal correctional institution. But at *The Nation*, who cares about such details? □

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Ideas?

We cannot withstand the temptation—we are unable to resist quoting the admirable words of Miss Ada Louise Huxtable, an eminent critic of architecture, printed in—of all places—the *New York Review of Books*, that ponderous font of liberal snobbery. Writing about the 20th-century vicissitudes of our civilization, she states:

The changes that were heralded as liberating forces turned out to be vast and shattering, with shock waves beyond anyone's comprehension. Those changes eventually restructured—or unstructured—society. . . . This 'progress' had a high price—there were racial and social dislocations of universal dimensions. To the transformation of environment and expectations was added the unsettling knowledge of the complexities of human behavior; vast explosions of scale did nothing to help disoriented inner lives. Tradition was destroyed, and the destruction was celebrated. In the end, everything that was meant to illuminate or improve the human condition struck heavy blows at basic beliefs and values. The 'center' was increasingly dissolved in violence. Today, the sustaining standards and restraints of centuries are gone. We live in a time of failed human relationships and unprecedented dangers, from nuclear warfare to random death. The twentieth century has given us too much, too soon, too fast; it has delivered toys and triumphs and devastation. We are all victims.

How right she is! How superbly correct! But why does Miss Huxtable stop short of telling us *why* everything went wrong? We have an intimation:

LIBERAL CULTURE

ideas shape beliefs, history, human actions, societies and their fates. And what ideas were the most influential in fashioning our civilization and society of today, as they loom so dismally in Miss Huxtable's vision? We know what those ideas are. We trust that the intelligent people who edit the *New York Review* know too. They just prefer not to call them by name.

How to Deal with Truth

A famous popularizer of science, Professor Isaac Asimov, recently embarked in the *New York Times Sunday Magazine* on a search for the truth about the current conflict between creationists and evolutionists:

It is only in school that American youngsters in general are ever likely to hear any reasoned exposition of the evolutionary viewpoint. They might find such a viewpoint in books, magazines, newspapers or even, on occasion, on television. But church and family can easily censor printed matter or television. Only the school is beyond their control.

We are slowly becoming aware of what schools which are beyond parental control have inflicted upon America's children. Professor Asimov, who is wholeheartedly on the

side of evolutionism, seems to believe that: a) something can still be censored in today's America; and b) that the theory of evolution is a pitiful victim, oppressed and persecuted by everybody in this country except for public-school biology teachers. If this is his notion of science-based fact and empiricism, Mr. Asimov is a hysterical fideist haunted by superstitious hallucinations. If it is a calculated mendacity in defense of the theory of evolution, it raises suspicions that the theory is so weak that its survival depends on some not-too-subtle twisting of the truth.

Useful Idiots

"Useful idiots" is Lenin's (yes, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin's) denomination for Western liberals, who are as sedulously at work in America today as they were in Lenin's time. Their current hangout in New York City is *The Nation*—a journal of opinion. In one of its recent editorials (yes, editorials), *The Nation's* editors made a thunderous point—that the Polish Secret Service (whose agent was, of late, caught red-handed while transferring information) does not share its findings with the KGB. In fact, *The Nation* exclaims proudly, "... where does it say in the Warsaw Pact that signatories are obliged to ex-

change information acquired by their espionage services?"

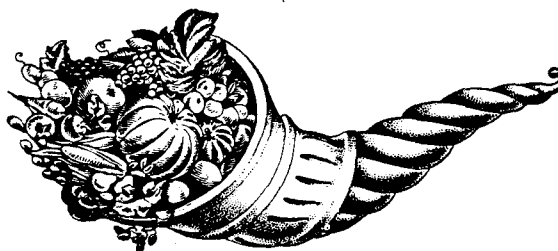
These words would be read in Warsaw (and in Prague, Budapest, etc.) with a certitude that they had been uttered by a dangerous, raving maniac. From the Elbe to Vladivostok, every child knows that *all* satellite spy rings are not only controlled but run centrally from Moscow and that no riot, rebellion or strike within the empire can abolish this fundamental fact of life; it is as immutable as the Copernican system or the theory of gravity. Not until Solidarity assumes full political power and dismantles certain internal security structures set up by Stalin (which are still robust and alive) will Poland have its *own* secret service. But we doubt whether the useful idiots from *The Nation* would like that. In such a case, the Poles would immediately sell out to the CIA, at least in the eyes of American liberals.

Hottentot Morality

Clergy & Laity Concerned, a left-radical organization devoted to supporting Marxian dogma (or Soviet global policies, whichever comes first) by using religious concerns as political weapons, exults in a letter to (where else?) *The Nation* over the political demise of Ernest Lefever:

As one of the organizations 'smeared' publicly by Lefever, we believe that groups focusing on specific issues can have a major impact on U.S. foreign policy.

When Moral Majority, or anti-abortion PAC's, focus on specific issues it's bad. When CLC and its kind focus on specific issues it's good. What would Voltaire have said about the moral level of contemporary political exchanges? □



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